



# **PARK RIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY**

## **STRATEGIC PLAN**

Prepared by the  
Board of Trustees  
and  
Library Staff

Approved by the Park Ridge Public Library Board of Trustees August 2009

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## **I. MISSION AND VISION**

### **MISSION**

The Mission of the Park Ridge Public Library is to provide the community with access to information, recreation and enlightenment by promoting materials, programs and services.

### **VISION**

The vision of the Park Ridge Public Library is to be a community resource that dynamically provides fresh formats, materials for personal growth and stimulating programs, accomplished through a friendly and professional staff in an enhanced building with up-to-date and accessible technology.

## II. CONTEXT FOR PLANNING

A major role of the Library Board of Trustees is to plan for the Library based on the Library's Mission and Vision. The Strategic Plan helps guide Board decisions; it is a working document that is regularly reviewed and revised to respond to the changing needs of the community served.

The Library serves the traditional function of a Library as a source and provider of information and it is an inviting place where residents can meet, gather and interact with each other. Today it is also a technology center, offering free access to the Internet and a variety of computer programs. The Library provides workshops that teach residents how to obtain the information they need in their daily lives and a forum to share and discuss ideas.

In these challenging economic times the Library is busier than ever, providing access to library materials and information. In addition, the Library has expanded the number and scope of technology workshops and added programs for job seekers.

The Library Board of Trustees strives to provide a library that meets the needs and interests of residents and values community input. To learn more about the community's opinions of the Library, the Board of Trustees recently hired the Public Opinion Laboratory at Northern Illinois University to conduct a telephone survey of 400 adult residents. The survey was completed in the spring of 2008 and focused on the following areas; collections, services, programs, website, newsletter, service to children and young adults and physical facility. This information and the results of several previous surveys serve as a guide to the Strategic Directions formulated by the Library's Board of Trustees, Director and Staff.

During the development of this plan, the Board reviewed data from a number of sources including the Illinois Library Association Standards for Public Libraries and the Illinois Public Library Annual Report. These documents provide a basis with which to compare collection sizes, levels of service, and hours of operation among public libraries in Illinois. Demographic information along with circulation statistics, daily visitors, library card holders and program attendance numbers were used to measure library activity and plan for the future.

Source: 2008 Community Survey <http://www.parkridgelibrary.org/niu-survey.html>

### III. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The six strategic directions listed below were identified by the Board as major focal areas for the plan. Following is a brief summary of the current status of the Library as it relates to the strategic directions along with information the Board reviewed during development. The strategic directions are listed in order of priority.

#### **Assess and address community needs**

The Board and staff continuously assess community needs through formal and informal surveys, patron response cards and verbal requests so the Library can strengthen and expand the collection, services and programs it provides to the community.

According to the Illinois Library Standards<sup>1</sup>, the Library's book collection is between the levels of "Established" and "Advanced". Circulation of audiovisual materials has increased 66% over the past five years; however, audiovisual collections are still just above the "Minimum" level (see Appendices B & C). The Library's budget for books, audiovisual and electronic resources has increased less than 2% per year over the past five years resulting in reduced buying power for new titles and other materials.

#### **Optimize operational efficiency, flexibility and effectiveness**

In today's world, the role of computer technology is essential to the use and operation of the Library. The Library plays an increasingly important role in helping residents become informed and comfortable with new developments in technology by offering one-on-one instruction as well as group workshops on a wide variety of computer related subjects.

High quality access to the Internet through high-speed connections with up-to-date equipment and software is provided at workstations throughout the building and an automated reservation system directs users to available stations. Forty-three computers are adequate for all but the busiest times of day. At peak times (Noon-1:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m. and 7:00-9:00 p.m.) there is a waiting time of approximately 15-30 minutes. Secure WI-FI throughout the building and on the adjacent grounds offers more opportunities for access to the Internet and the Library's many online services for those with a personal laptop.

The Library is currently updating its website and servers to provide improved access to the vast resources, programming and services of the Library.

The Library's location is popular among all residents and draws a steady stream of people to the Uptown area an average of 1,400 visitors each day. It is conveniently located in the heart of the Uptown business district next to public transportation, local restaurants, movie theater and shops. It is easily accessible on foot, public transportation or by car and parking is adjacent to the building.

The current physical facility presents major challenges to the Library which lacks sufficient space to meet the needs of the community based on the results of several community surveys. The Library is 36,000 square feet and consists of two structures, the original building built in 1958 and the addition that doubled the size of the building in 1977. The facility's aging systems have been well maintained through numerous large and small projects over the years:

- Upgraded electrical service and increased electrical outlets
- Replaced single boiler with a multi-stage heating system
- Replaced building compressor
- Replaced air handler

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<sup>1</sup> "Serving Our Public" Standards for Illinois Public Libraries, 2009

- Replace ballasts with more energy efficient units
- Added lights to dimly lit stack areas
- Removed all asbestos
- Remodeled meeting room and Young Adult area

The Library Board of Trustees recognizes that there are many limits of the facility in regards to the American with Disabilities Act, however these deficiencies cannot be corrected within the existing facility.

Although great effort has been made in the past five years to reallocate space to allow more room for a growing DVD collection, youth and children’s programming as well as quiet space, every change in one area has an adverse effect in another area. The continued lack of space limits the Library’s ability to:

- Offer concurrent programs to serve different segments of the community (story times for children and daytime programs for seniors)
- Provide adequate space for children and teens
- Increase collections without reducing other collections
- Provide quiet space
- Provide adequate workspace for staff

In comparing the Park Ridge Public Library with eleven communities in the Chicagoland metropolitan area, it is clear that the Library provides much less space for the public than the libraries in comparable communities. (Appendix G).

	Ratio Square Feet/Population
Average for 11 comparable communities	1.68
Park Ridge Public Library	0.95

**Promote awareness and increase use**

The Library serves residents of all ages and interests, from birth through all stages of adult life with its many programs, services and collections. It is open seven days a week and provides many online services that are available 24/7 such as remote access to the online computer, reference assistance via online chat, databases and downloadable books and films.

Responding to resident comments and survey responses that indicated that many people lacked specific knowledge of the Library’s myriad of services, programs and collections, the Library has attempted to improve the general awareness in the community. During the past three years the Library has:

- Redesigned the printed newsletter that is mailed every other month to residents and businesses
- Provided copies of the newsletter at the Library, City Hall and Metra Station
- Created an electronic newsletter that is e-mailed bi-weekly
- Increased local newspaper articles and program listings
- Sent e-mail notices of new materials acquired
- Established display areas in key locations of the Library for additional handouts

This year the Information Coordinator and Reader Services Manager conducted focus group interviews at both public middle schools. The information will be used in future planning for the Young Adult department.

Due to the popularity of library programs, the Library has expanded programming for all ages. Feedback and attendance have been positive for new offerings such as: special exhibits, film screenings and discussions, baby story times, computer tutoring sessions, computer design and gaming for youth, and daytime programs for seniors. Despite these improvements, the Library is not currently able to meet demand and must frequently turn patrons away due to the size of the meeting room and the lack of availability of the meeting room space. In the past year Park Ridge patrons have been turned away from over 100 programs because of limited space. Community groups wishing to use the room often have to take a third or fourth choice for dates due to the many events in the program room and because of high demand groups are limited to one meeting per quarter.

In 2009 the Board and staff investigated creating a separate program room for children's programming by installing a modular building on the property to house some staff work space, however it was determined that this would not create enough space inside the building to provide an adequate room for children's programs.

#### **Enhance service through staff and board development**

The Library makes every effort to employ and support a knowledgeable, flexible and equitably compensated staff team that responds positively and creatively to changing public library needs and the environment.

Continuing education is a priority and staff is encouraged to seek additional training and network with staff at other libraries. The Library provides an environment that supports new ideas and new challenges with the goal of continually improving service.

Residents praise staff in terms of their knowledge and helpfulness. There is a high expectation that the Library will continue to employ excellent staff at the levels needed to best serve the community.

The Library works in conjunction with a committee of the Park Ridge City Council to recruit dynamic members to its Board of Trustees who may serve a maximum of three terms of three years each. These Trustees bring a wide range of experiences and represent the demographics and diverse interests of the residents of Park Ridge.

#### **Strengthen community support**

The Library is providing outreach to former nonusers such as teens and young adults by providing materials and programs that appeal to this age group. The introduction of a gaming collection and related programming has increased the use of other library materials and services by this segment of the population. Outreach to 2,500 young adults was accomplished this past year.

Each year, the Children's and Readers Services Departments visit each of the schools for a variety of activities. There are five public elementary schools, two public middle schools, two public high schools and four private K-8<sup>th</sup> schools. The Library serves over 5,800 students in K-8<sup>th</sup> grade and almost 4,000 students in the two high schools.

The Library has expanded its programming and services targeted to Seniors, who comprise 20% of the population, by providing daytime programming, home bound delivery and a Low Vision Support group.

The Library has enhanced services to small businesses, adding workshops for job seekers and developing additional workshops for improving computer skills.

Through an increase in outreach plus additional services and programming, as well as its augmented marketing and promotion, the public is gaining awareness of the Library and its importance to the community.

To strengthen connection and participation, the Library is identifying and developing a database of key individuals who can serve as resources for the Board and potential participants for future citizen input and advocacy.

The Library is also working to improve its communication with the City Council by presenting regular reports at City Council meetings and by sending invitations to its Aldermanic liaison to visit the Library at selected intervals. In these meetings and visits, the needs of the Library will continue to be relayed. Likewise, the public will become aware of these needs through published press releases of these communications.

### **Secure the future**

The Library's primary source of funding is property taxes. Over the past five years, most of the increases in the budget have been for personnel expenses in the form of salary and benefits commensurate with other City departments and local governments. Due to the almost flat funding for collections and operations, increases in one area must be compensated by a decrease in another. While funding has remained constant, the cost for online resources, books and other materials, programming and services have continued to increase.

For 2009-10 the Board reduced the budget by \$50,000 and imposed a freeze on salaries as requested by the City Council. Other sources of revenue such as grants and donations are an important means for funding special projects and supplementing the budget, however in the current economy this support is declining. The Board and staff have been active in researching and pursuing new grant funding opportunities and are planning an annual fundraising event.

## **IV. ACTION PLANS**

The Board and Staff have developed a set of action plans to achieve these six goals and will work together to complete these plans over the next several years. All objectives are considered equally important and interdependent; they are not listed in any priority.

### **Assess and address community needs**

- Identify ways to make the Library more convenient to use and promote them to the community
- Provide new programs and services in response to current trends
- Utilize resident input to identify areas for improvement
- Identify and target nonusers
- Expand services to students

### **Optimize operational efficiency, flexibility and effectiveness**

- Use available technologies to improve internal efficiency
- Utilize space for optimal efficiency
- Optimize features of new Local Area Network
- Provide new formats and new services as appropriate
- Eliminate services, collections or programs that are no longer popular or necessary

### **Promote awareness and increase use**

- Use new Library website and online presence to increase awareness of library services, programs and collection
- Identify new ways to reach residents
- Use local media to reach residents in new ways
- Promote use of the Park Ridge Community Network
- Develop a fundraising plan

### **Enhance service through staff and board development**

- Participate in continuing education opportunities
- Network with other library professionals
- Expand technology training for all staff

### **Strengthen community support**

- Promote staff participation in community organizations and community projects to build positive relationships
- Improve communication by Trustees with elected officials
- Increase number of library card holders
- Continue to provide excellent customer service
- Communicate facility needs
- Develop Library champions

### **Secure the future**

- Ensure stable operating support
- Seek additional funding for special projects
- Recruit, hire and retain dynamic, responsive and motivated staff
- Encourage the Mayor and the respective selection committee to appoint interested, responsible and pro-active members to the Board of Trustees
- Maintain an up-to-date technology infrastructure
- Identify short and long term facility needs

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## A. Park Ridge Community Profile

<b>Total population</b>	<b>37,775</b>		
Male	17,902		
Female	19,873		
Population by age			
	Under 5 years	2,194	5.8%
	5 to 9 years	2,681	7.1%
	10 to 14 years	2,782	7.4%
	15 to 19 years	2,284	6.0%
	20 to 24 years	1,389	3.7%
	25 to 34 years	3,138	8.3%
	35 to 44 years	6,128	16.2%
	45 to 64 years	5,708	15.1%
	65 and older	7,427	19.6%
Population by race			
	White	95.4%	
	Hispanic or Latino	2.9%	
	Asian	2.7%	
	African American	0.2%	
	Other	1.1%	
Median age	42.5 years old		
Median family income	\$100,633*		
Education level (Age 25 and above)			
	No High School Degree	7.7%	
	High School Graduate	18.5%	
	1 or more year of college, no degree	21.6%	
	Associate Degree	6.0%	
	Bachelor's Degree	27.8%	
	Graduate or professional degree	18.4%	

Source: U. S. Census, 2000  
 \*CNN Money.com, 2009

## B. Library Profile – 5 Year Comparison

	2003-04	2008-09	Change
Number of card holders	27,761	26,188	(1,573)
% of population	73%	69%	(4%)

	2003-04	2008-09	Change
Library Visits (per capita)	11.3	13.1	16%
Library Materials Owned			
Books	222,831	217,680	(2%)
Videos/DVDs	9,127	14,677	61%
Audio recordings	11,672	13,416	15%
Circulation Total	650,694	847,762	30%

	2003-04	2008-09	Change
Programs	525*	934	78%
Attendance	21,945	30,182	38%
*Library closed for 6 weeks for asbestos removal			

	2003-04	2008-09	Change
Total Operating Budget	\$3,672,700	\$4,298,800	17%
Materials Expenditures	\$552,932	\$600,729	9%
Per Resident	\$14.63	\$15.90	7%
Staff Expenditures	\$2,134,021	\$2,602,381	22%
Per Resident	\$56.49	\$68.89	22%
*Consumer Price Index	\$185.90	\$214.03	15%

\*U.S. Dept. of Labor – Bureau of Labor Statistics <ftp://ftp.bls.gov/pub/special.requests/cpi/cpi.ai.txt>

Source: Park Ridge Public Library Annual Reports

### C. Illinois Library Standards

The Illinois Library Association (ILA) has developed a four-tiered standard system based on service population.\*\* These standards serve as a statewide source of guidance for service levels and are detailed in “*Serving Our Public: Standards for Illinois Public Libraries*”.

Libraries in the northwest suburbs of Chicago typically have a heritage of very strong service to their communities. Libraries serving well-educated populations expect well-developed and sophisticated service.

The Library Board of Trustees regularly reviews these standards to determine what level is appropriate for the Library.

	Minimum	Growing	Established	Advanced	<b>Park Ridge</b>
Book Collection	88,900	145,550	174,000	268,000	<b>217,680</b>
Audiovisual Collection**	21,873	32,810	43,747	54,684	<b>28,093</b>
Hours of Service	64 hrs. per week Sundays Sep-May	68 hrs. per week Sundays Sep-May	72 hrs. per week Sundays All Year	72 hrs. per week Sundays All Year	<b>70 hrs. per week Sundays All Year</b>
Staffing Levels (Full-time equivalents)	27	37	46	56	<b>49*</b>

FY 2008-2009

- book collection is between the Established and Advanced level
- audiovisual collection is between Minimum and Growing level
- hours of service are just below the Established/Advanced level
- staffing is above the Established level

\*In order to compare the Park Ridge Public Library with other libraries in Illinois and the state standards, this report uses the number recorded in the State Annual Report. The City of Park Ridge uses a different formula to calculate full time equivalent which results in a total of 56.395 FTE.

Source : *Serving Our Public 2.0: Standards for Illinois Public Libraries*, ILA, 2009  
*Serving Our Public: Standards for Illinois Public Libraries*, ILA, 2002\*\*  
 2008-09 Annual Report – Park Ridge Public Library  
 2000 Census – Park Ridge population 37,775

## **D. Current Use**

The community strongly endorses the current collections and services as evidenced by its use of the Library. Use of the Library continues to increase as indicated by the statistics for program attendance and circulation of Library materials.

- 69% of Park Ridge residents have Library cards.
- Circulation has increased 30% since FY03-04.
- Program attendance grew 38% from FY03-04 to FY08-09. All programs for adults, young adults and children are held in the Library's one large meeting room. We have reached maximum capacity for room use. Combined with frequent use by community groups we are unable to meet the many requests we receive for additional programs.
- In the past year over 100 programs were filled to capacity and had waiting lists.

## **E. Community Changes**

The Library serves a large population of children age 14 and under. According to the 2000 Census these young readers represent 20% of the total Park Ridge population. Families with children are heavy users of the Library and 42% of all Library materials that are circulated are from the Children's Department.

Although forecasts indicate that the total population of Park Ridge will remain relatively static, it is expected that the population of adults 55+ will grow as the Baby Boomers age but remain in their homes for many years to come. This population segment traditionally uses the Library frequently for materials, technology and programming.

20% of the current population is 65 or older and with more leisure time. Residents in this category are strong Library users, frequently attend Library programs and make up the majority of the Library's volunteer corps.

A growing number of households have family members that were born outside of the United States and there is an increasing need for Library materials in other languages. This trend is expected to continue.

When the current redevelopment projects are fully occupied, more residents will be living in close proximity to the Library. More businesses will be located in the Uptown Area with later hours of operation than most of the present businesses. This may result in even more business for the Library during the evening hours and on Sundays.

If the current economic slump continues, the Library will expect to see additional increases in the circulation of library materials, use of library computers and attendance at programs of interest to job seekers.

The next United States Census will be conducted in 2010, data from this census will provide more current information on community demographics.

## F. Community Input

Although the community voices high overall satisfaction with the Library, residents also feel that the Library could increase its collections to better meet residents' needs. They seek more:

- AV materials – CD's, DVD's and audio books
- Popular fiction and non-fiction books both in variety of titles and number of multiple copies purchased

In response to the question, "What would you like the Park Ridge Public Library to offer that it does not now offer?" in the 2000 Telephone Survey, common themes include:

- More computer classes, computers and computer rooms, meeting rooms, space, quiet space, programs for all ages, and parking
- Improve the teen area and offer more programs for this age group
- Provide more programs for young children and more space and materials for children
- Provide a coffee shop or lounge area in the Library

*The Library added several more computers, additional computer workshops and WI-FI. In 2006 the teen area was remodeled and enhanced, including the installation of all new furniture in this area.*

In response to the question in the 2007 user survey, "What could the Library Board do to improve the Library?" common themes include:

- Bigger space for children and teens along with more books and other materials for these age groups
- More study rooms, meeting rooms, more computers and quiet space
- Provide more programs for adults and children, including more computer classes
- Provide a coffee shop in the Library
- Provide more parking

*A few additional programs have been added within the limitations of the budget and meeting room schedule. Due to lack of space additional improvements are not possible.*

In the 2008 Telephone Survey residents indicated that the following were most important for the Library to provide:

- Areas to sit and read
- Online databases
- Quiet study rooms
- Children's area
- Programs for adults, teens and children
- Computer access
- Meeting room

Also in the 2008 Telephone Survey, residents indicated support for a larger library. Thirty-four percent are strongly in favor, 35.1% are somewhat in favor, 16.5% were somewhat opposed and 14.3% were strongly opposed. Priorities in a new facility included:

- Greater handicap accessibility
- Expanded children's programs and a larger children's area
- More seating
- More computers
- More quiet study areas
- More adult programs
- Expanded meeting space

Strong support was indicated for providing space for community groups to meet with 65% being strongly or somewhat in favor, along with 70% indicating they are in favor of the Library being quiet at all times.

Respondents also indicated that they used the Library website to access the online catalog, place holds, renew books, check their library account, access online databases, register for programs and access 24/7 reference service.

A frequent comment in both surveys from people that did not regularly use the Library is that they “do not have enough time,” however, most of them indicated that there was nothing the Library could do to change this.

Source: Telephone Survey, 2008 & 2000  
Output Measures In-house User Survey 2007

## G. Comparison Communities

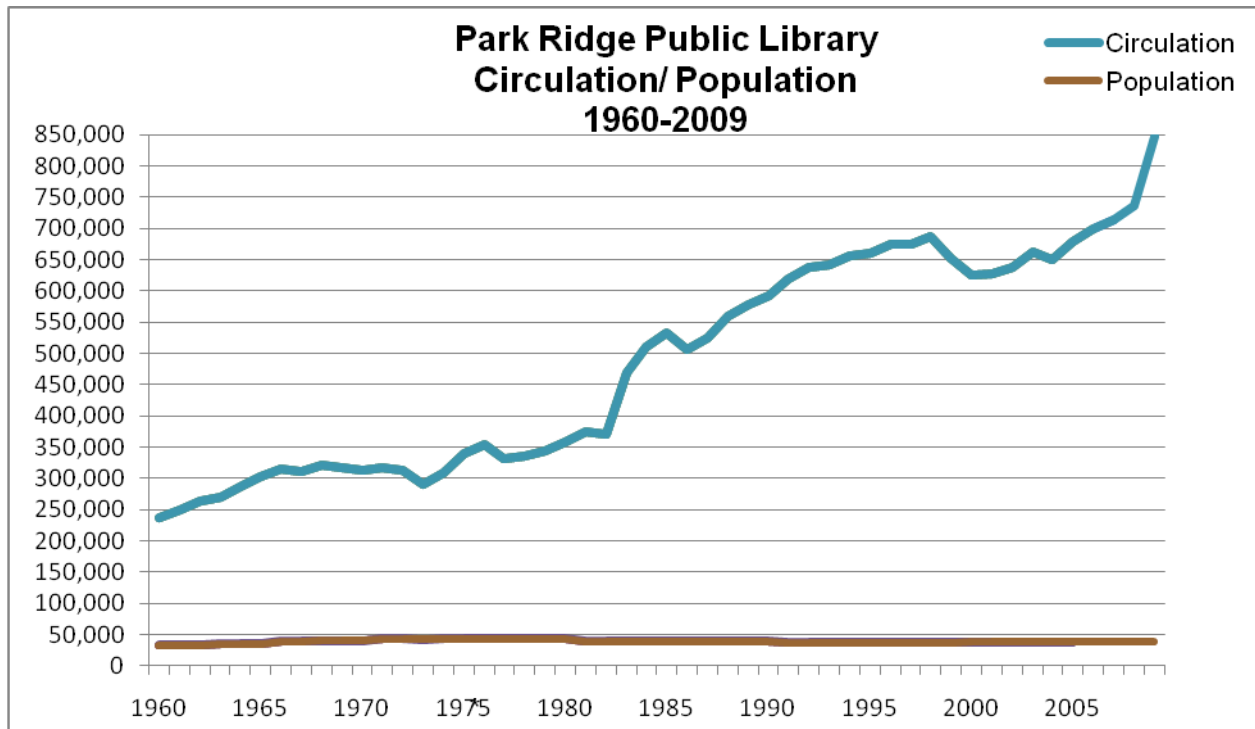
Community	Library Service Population	Building Sq. Ft.	Sq. Ft. Capita
Northbrook	34,699	85,341	2.46
Wilmette	27,651	65,654	2.37
Ela – Lake Zurich	32,419	72,000	2.22
Elmhurst	42,762	90,000	2.10
Des Plaines	56,945	82,000	1.44
Barrington	42,127	60,000	1.42
Highland Park *	30,038	42,000	1.40
Downers Grove	48,724	67,738	1.39
Glenview **	44,443	50,908	1.15
Niles	58,218	65,193	1.12
Crystal Lake	39,788	40,000	1.01
Park Ridge	37,775	36,040	0.95

Average for 11 comparison communities - 1.68 sq. ft. per person

Source: Library Administrators Council of Northern Illinois, 2008 Annual Salary Survey

**Glenview – completed 2010	90,000 sq. ft. – new construction	2.02
*Highland Park Est. completion 2011	10,000 sq. ft. – addition	1.73

## H. Historical Comparison



In FY 2008/09 the Library had the highest total circulation of library materials ever recorded, a total of 847,762 items. As you can see from the chart above, the population of Park Ridge has remained fairly constant over the past 49 years, while circulation of library materials has steadily increased since 1980.