



Sycamore Library

Strategic Plan-Executive Summary

Vision: *Inspiring all residents to learn, discover, create, and grow.*

Mission: *The Sycamore Public Library offers a safe, comfortable place to encourage curiosity, and foster imagination by providing exceptional customer service, dynamic programming, and a locally responsive collection.*

STRATEGIC GOAL 1: *The Sycamore Public Library continues to meet the needs and goals of the community with access to relevant collections and technology with our unique focus on popular interest.*

- Library visitors increase annually.
- Cumulative annual use of collections and services increases annually.
- The number of new library card issued increases annually.
- Attendance at library programs increases annually.
- Evaluate becoming a District Library.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2: *The library is supported, used and understood as vital to the community.*

- We continually evaluate the library's roles, services, and programs to meet community interests. (Anticipate what people need/want. Read the culture and changing interests to spur creativity and learning.)
- Staff members are contributing to and knowledgeable about library thinking and innovations nationally, applying relevant innovations locally.
- An active Fan Club enthusiastically promotes the library to others.
- The library's brand is defined, strengthened, and conveyed to Sycamore residents.
- The library has a deep and appropriate reciprocal referral network to meet patron needs and requests and community organizations refer people to the library, engage with the library, and collaborate with the library.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3: *Staff members are passionate about the library, excel in their roles, are life-long learners who love to help others learn, and approach their work with flexibility and adaptability.*

- We recruit, retain, encourage, and promote excellent staff members.
- Patrons see our library staff as professional, knowledgeable, open, and helpful.
- Patrons give positive feedback regarding their library experience.
- Circulation and program participation numbers increase annually.

STRATEGIC GOAL 4: *The Executive Staff and Board lead the Sycamore Library in fulfilling its vision and mission.*

- The Board follows commonly accepted best practices of public library boards.
- The levy request is reviewed and approved with an eye toward achieving the strategic goals and fulfilling community needs.
- Staff members sense the leadership of the Executive Staff and Board in achieving the mission, and feel supported by the Executive Staff and the Board.
- We create and execute a capital plan that is responsive to the changing needs of patrons and the community.

STRATEGIC GOAL 5: *The Mayor, City Council, and City Manager are partners in ensuring that the library remains a vital element of the community.*

- A communication plan to convey the passion of library patrons to the Mayor, City Council, and City manager is developed and implemented.
- The Mayor is engaged in at least one public library activity each year.
- City Council publicly recognizes a major library achievement or event at least once annually. (Recognized achievement to be determined each year.)
- In dialog with the Mayor, City Council, and City Manager, we evaluate becoming a District Library.

Now that the planning process is complete, we will move forward with achieving our goals.

Sycamore Public Library-2015 Strategic Plan Priorities

- 1) **District Library** – determine whether or not to move forward to become a District Library by the end of 2015.
- 2) **Compensation** – a compensation plan is in place for 2016.
- 3) **Governance** – focus board on strategic plan and library mission/vision; remove board “history and habits” that detract from strategy.
- 4) **Community Awareness** – build community awareness of the awesome library with increased messaging and branding; start the fan club and the printed newsletter.
- 5) **Materials Selection Policy** – update the selection policies to be in alignment with strategic plan, mission, and vision.
- 6) **Complete easily implemented tasks** – identify strategic plan tasks that are fairly straightforward, requiring few personnel or financial resources to implement; special focus on governance and community awareness.

A Short History of the Sycamore Public Library

Although the Sycamore Public Library did not open its doors until 1892, we can trace its roots back to 1875 when a Chautauqua Scientific Circle was formed in Sycamore.

Once members had completed the course, they established the Athena Literary Society in order to form a public library. Over the course of three years they raised \$700 and asked city council to appropriate money for books and that the mayor appoint a board of directors.

On July 12, 1892, the Sycamore Public Library opened in Hoyt and Rogers' Store, second floor, in the backroom. This building now is occupied by Marlyn's Majorettes. The City Council appropriated \$800 to purchase books. The Athena Literary Society assisted with funding the library for the first two years. Miss Flora Jeannette Dow, a member of Athena, was the first librarian.

In 1902, Andrew Carnegie offered the City of Sycamore \$10,000 for the construction of a library, provided an acceptable site could be secured and that the Sycamore City Council would annually appropriate at least 10% of his donation for maintaining the building. Mr. Frederick B. Townsend donated the property where the library stands today. Miss Dow received the honor of placing the first trowel of mortar on the cornerstone on May 24, 1905.

Over the next 90 years, several renovation and remodeling projects took place and then on October 14, 1995, a new era of growth began with the groundbreaking ceremony for the library expansion.

In 2012, the library underwent a full remodel to recreate and expand spaces for the public. This project expanded the children's department providing spaces for preschoolers and more grown up spaces for grade school children, the teen department gained additional space for the growing collection as well as seating and room to hang out. The Adult Services Department was reorganized and new seating was added to make more room for visitors to work, study, and access the Internet through Wi-Fi.

In late 2013, the Executive Director wrote a grant to fund a facilitator to help with updating the library's strategic plan.

We would like to thank the Robert's Family Foundation for funding this project. The planning process began in February, 2014. We now have a plan that will keep the library staff and board focused for the next several years.

We are thankful to Stacy Reynolds of Anchor Advisors for her facilitation of the strategic planning process. We are appreciative of the energy, ideas, and time that Dawn Graves, Emily Salis, Dan Gibble, Dave Yanke, and Nancy Godfrey provided as we began this planning process to ensure that the library's plan reflects the needs and wishes of the community and local organizations.