



Bismarck
Veterans Memorial
Public Library

2023-2030 STRATEGIC PLAN

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

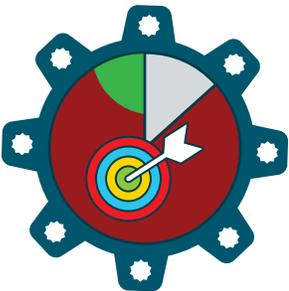
The Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library (BVMPL) provides a wide variety of programs and services to Bismarck-Burleigh County, a population of 99,000. The library operates a 70,000 square foot building. Two outreach services, Bismarck Mobile Library and Burleigh County Library, ensure all residents of the county have access to library material. A five-member board of trustees, appointed by the Bismarck City Commission, provides planning and financial oversight. BVMPL is fortunate to have two active and effective fundraising arms: Bismarck Library Foundation, Inc. and Friends of the Bismarck Public Library.

Planning and groundwork for the 2023-2030 Strategic Plan took place in 2022. The plan provides direction and a cohesive vision for the library. The plan outlines the library's goals relating to the building and grounds, internal policies and communication, collections, services, outreach, and partnerships. These goals and associated objectives position the library to better serve the Bismarck-Burleigh County community as a relevant and high-achieving public service organization. We will leverage our strengths gained from meeting the objectives to serve as the community's "third space," a communal space distinct from work and home.

The plan prepares BVMPL to adapt to changes in our community so we may continue to successfully meet the needs of our patrons. It reflects the best of who we are, highlighting the passion and commitment of staff, volunteers, and stakeholders.

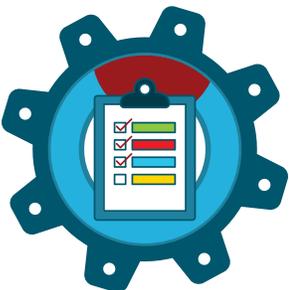
STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2022

BVMPL's 2023-2030 Strategic Plan builds on the accomplishments and strengths gained through the library's Strategic Plan 2015-2022. The plan had 67 unique goals; 61 of these goals saw completion, or 91% completion rate. The library reached these impressive accomplishments thanks to the dedicated public service of the staff, volunteers, board of trustees, Bismarck Library Foundation, Friends of the Bismarck Public Library, and commission liaisons.



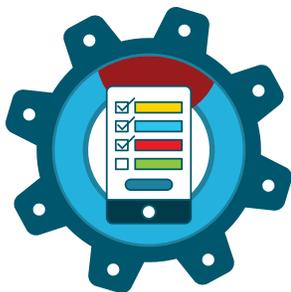
IMPORTANT GOALS ACHIEVED

- HVAC renovation
- Roof renovation
- Security services
- Website redesigned
- Library mascot "Booker"
- Teen HQ constructed
- Full-time teen staff position
- Salary survey and adjustments
- Comprehensive disaster plan



ACCOMPLISHMENTS ABOVE & BEYOND

- Bismarck Library Foundation, Inc. fund-raised for a new Burleigh County Library bookmobile and paid for vehicle wrap and design
- Kupper Chevrolet donated a new cargo van for the Bismarck Mobile Library and paid for vehicle wrap and design
- Library administration handled the COVID-19 pandemic with clear guidance, transparent communication, and empathy; employees continued to offer service and virtual programs throughout the pandemic



COMMUNITY SURVEY

- Ten questions relating to community use and perceptions
- Single-choice, matrix and short-answer questions
- Distributed via library website, social media, and mass email
- 1,400 respondents (380 responses required for validity)
- 94.5% with library card, 2% without a card, and 3.5% unsure
- Data sortable by age, zip code, frequency of in-person visits, and card-holding status



ADULT AND CHILDREN'S FOCUS GROUPS

- Assessed familiarity and favorability with library services, potential improvements, and services most frequently used
- Adults: four participants aged from low-30s to mid-70s; a retiree, a freelancer, and two full-time workers
- Children: eight participants aged 5-12; four families and two attending parents
- Positive feedback: staff assistance and friendliness, quality of collections, and benefit to the community
- Growth areas: creative additions to collections, and aesthetic and practical improvements to facilities



ALL-STAFF MEETING

- Reinforced the library's mission, vision, purpose, and values to staff for unified sense of purpose and momentum
- Surveyed staff informally about needed changes, current strengths, areas of growth for improving library services and collections, and potential challenges within the library
- Created stronger sense of mission and value in the library's work, staff role within it, and overall pride in the library's customer service/patron support



STAKEHOLDER MEETING

- Library board of trustees, library administration, library leadership team, city and county government officials, Friends of the Bismarck Public Library, and the Bismarck Library Foundation, Inc. determined needs, priorities, and potential opportunities for BVMPL, while looking toward the next decade
- Community survey and focus group results aided in assessment
- Worked collaboratively to identify priorities and goals for the 2023-2030 Strategic Plan



OUR MISSION

Collecting, organizing, and providing open access to educational, informational, recreational, and cultural resources



OUR VISION

Personal Enrichment for All



OUR VALUES

- Ensuring fast access to information
- Treating all patrons with respect and equity
- Responding to community needs
- Providing quality basic services without charge
- Protecting freedom of information, privacy, and confidentiality
- Providing a safe and secure environment
- Stewarding community resources
- Focusing on cooperative development through partnerships
- Encouraging programming and display of the arts



STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

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FACILITIES

MAINTAIN AND UPDATE LIBRARY FACILITY, GROUNDS, AND TECHNOLOGY TO BEST SUPPORT AND WELCOME COMMUNITY

LIBRARY LEADERSHIP TEAM AND ADMINISTRATION

OBJECTIVE

TARGET

ADDRESS PATRON REQUESTS TO IMPROVE LOWER LEVEL

- Provide a visible staffing presence in lower level

IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY OF FACILITY FOR PATRONS

- Provide a facility map and improve/add way-finding signage
- Participate in the City's facility assessment examining accessibility of restrooms

INVESTIGATE FUNDING SOURCES FOR FACILITY PROJECTS

- Engage consultant to conduct a branch library study
- Paint main level
- Replace carpet throughout facility
- Update ceiling tiles
- Replace two failing boilers

EXPLORE COMMUNITY'S NEED FOR A "THIRD SPACE"

- Research similar libraries' space adjustments and "third space" successes, a communal space distinct from work and home
- Conduct a survey to ascertain community needs for library spaces
- Hire architect to investigate improvements of current layout
- Evaluate possible adult program space similar to Teen HQ

RE-EVALUATE CURRENT DESIGNATION OF SPACES (2-3 YEAR GOAL)

- Examine altering study room configurations to increase group work spaces
- Investigate relocating collections to improve accessibility to most popular areas

FACILITATE UPGRADE OF PUBLIC RESTROOMS (5-YEAR GOAL)

- Prioritize restrooms as the next major facility project
- Seek revenue sources with assistance from funders and partners

MAINTAIN COFFEE SHOP SPACE

- Update equipment and furniture as needed
- Communicate with coffee shop owners at least quarterly to ensure their needs are being met

WORK WITH LANDSCAPE AND SIGNAGE COMPANIES

- Design and create signage for labyrinth
- Design, build, and place a sculpture on the south side
- Refresh landscaping throughout library grounds

IMPROVE TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

- For patrons and staff (subject to direction from library administration and trustees)

UPGRADE IT INFRASTRUCTURE

- Complete IT infrastructure upgrade by 2024

INTERNAL POLICIES

MAINTAIN AND CREATE INTERNAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES THAT BEST SUPPORT LIBRARY STAFF AND OVERALL LIBRARY VALUES

LIBRARY LEADERSHIP TEAM AND ADMINISTRATION

OBJECTIVE

TARGET

CURRENT MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES STATEMENTS

- Review and update statements, as necessary, on a 5-7 year basis, with the trustees
- Organize all-staff meeting to review the library's statements
- Gather feedback on suggested changes
- Propose approval of updated statements to the trustees

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Review all policies and procedures annually
- Present new and updated policies to the trustees for approval, in consultation with the City of Bismarck's Attorney's Office

PURSUE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- Provide training opportunities for staff and volunteers on an ongoing basis, such as conferences, webinars, and training with local agencies

PRIORITIZE PEOPLE-FIRST VALUES

- Use recent community survey to promote positive public perception of library services and staff internally and to the public
- Provide ongoing customer service training to all staff
- Ensure consistent, high-quality services to all patrons

OFFER INCREASED SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC WITHOUT OVER-EXTENDING STAFF

- Request funding from City of Bismarck for three full-time positions:
- Community Relations Coordinator
 - Adult Services Associate II
 - Library Assistant II – Technical Processing

TASK LISTS AND EMERGENCY TRANSITION PLANNING

- Draft task lists for all leadership team members and part-time positions
- Draft emergency transition plans for library administration positions

DEPARTMENT COLLABORATION

- Collaborate and communicate as department teams to move the library forward in the same direction
- Actively support and participate in the Strategic Plan
- Focus on the library's mission, vision, purpose, and values

COLLECTIONS

MAINTAIN AND UPDATE COLLECTIONS AND RESOURCES TO MEET PERSONAL ENRICHMENT NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

LIBRARY LEADERSHIP TEAM AND ADMINISTRATION

OBJECTIVE

TARGET

PROVIDE A HIGH QUALITY COLLECTION

- Design a plan to maintain quality and quantity of collections
- Strategically analyze collections by use, age, format, and subject matter
- Prioritize fiscal resources on areas of collections most utilized by patrons

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

- Assess feasibility and space
- Add seeds, tools, and hobby-related equipment into collections

PROVIDE ADDITIONAL DIGITAL SERVICES

- Create long-term plan addressing citizens' requests for additional digital resources
- Maintain balance between digital and print collection, per citizen survey and focus group feedback

LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION & TECHNOLOGY MANAGER

OBJECTIVE

TARGET

TECH-FOR-CHECKOUT

- Increase community access to critical internet services at home, e.g., Chromebooks and mobile hotspots

TRANSITION TO NEW ONLINE CATALOG

- Move to the more user-friendly online catalog interface, "Enterprise"
- Contract to hard-code the library's Enterprise profile to ensure catalog displays according to our specifications

LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION & COMMUNITY RELATIONS SPECIALIST

OBJECTIVE

TARGET

PROMOTE CURRENT COLLECTIONS

- Increase promotions of:
- Digital Collections (Libby, hoopla)
 - Physical/print collections



SERVICES-ADULT

MAINTAIN AND ADAPT ADULT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS TO MEET PERSONAL ENRICHMENT NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

ADULT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

OBJECTIVE

TARGET

IMPROVE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF ADULT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

- Develop marketing strategy including social media and Library 101 introduction videos
- Consider entry-area volunteer greeter or welcome sign

EVALUATE CLASS/PROGRAM RELEVANCE

- Evaluate current programs and discontinue irrelevant or undervalued programs
- Research ideas for new and engaging programs
- Enhance programs for older adults

COMMIT TO SERVE OUR COMMUNITY OF READERS

- Purchase quality print material per collection development policy
- Increase staff capacity and training to provide readers' advisory services
- Explore additional services and resources to support readers
- Promote books and reading

PROVIDE DIRECT PATRON ASSISTANCE

- Explore alternate service models, including scheduled one-on-ones, roaming reference, lower-level information desk or associate, and large group tour opportunities

LIBRARY LEADERSHIP TEAM AND ADMINISTRATION

OBJECTIVE

TARGET

HOST A COMMUNITY CIVILITY SERIES

- Human Library – create safe space for dialogue and topics discussed openly between “human books” and readers
- Outdoor Civility Dinner – bring community together to discuss differing opinions during a shared meal

EVALUATE OPTIONS FOR A COMMUNITY LIAISON

- Research and collaborate with partners on feasibility
- Investigate other libraries' experiences with similar positions
- Work with community partners and volunteers to support/implement community liaison position
- Pursue funding sources to support the position, if needed

SERVICES-YOUTH

MAINTAIN AND ADAPT YOUTH SERVICES AND PROGRAMS
TO MEET PERSONAL ENRICHMENT NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

YOUTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT

OBJECTIVE

TARGET

EVALUATE HOURS FOR CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

- Survey Children's Library patrons to ascertain program time preferences

ENGAGE HOMESCHOOL/REMOTE-SCHOOLING POPULATION

- Reach out to coalitions/community leaders
- Quantify potential local population of homeschool community and current use of library services

ENGAGE 9- TO 12-YEAR-OLD AGE RANGE

- Investigate preteen-specific focus groups
- Conduct informal survey via several local schools
- Focus on hands-on, creative, and skill-growing activities

ENGAGE 13- TO 17-YEAR-OLD AGE RANGE

- Return to in-school outreach and presentations
- Conduct age-specific focus groups

EVALUATE CLASS/PROGRAM RELEVANCE

- Evaluate current programs and discontinue irrelevant or undervalued programs
- Research ideas for new and engaging programs

MAINTAIN QUALITY COLLECTIONS

- Study "genrefication" as patron-friendly way of categorizing collections

COMMIT TO SERVE COMMUNITY OF READERS

- Purchase quality print material, per Collection Development Policy
- Increase staff capacity and training to provide readers' advisory services
- Explore additional services and resources to support readers
- Promote books and reading



My family spends quality time together reading, playing educational games, and attending programs at the library. The employees are so friendly and helpful. We are lucky to have such a great public library in Bismarck. If we're not at school, work, or home we're at the library.

— **Brianna R.**
Library Patron



OUTREACH

INCREASE PATRON USAGE OF LIBRARY FACILITIES AND RESOURCES BY NUMBER & DIVERSITY, FOCUSING ON WIDESPREAD AWARENESS OF AVAILABLE SERVICES/RESOURCES

LIBRARY LEADERSHIP TEAM AND ADMINISTRATION

OBJECTIVE

TARGET

INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF SERVICES, COLLECTIONS, AND FACILITIES

- Create welcome brochure and way-finding map
- Establish connections with community leaders
- Increase outreach and presence at community-wide events
- Provide local presentations with invitations for library tours
- Increase outreach to schools
- Increase public awareness of volunteer opportunities
- Partner with local tourism and collaborate with Bismarck-Mandan Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Create communications plan for improved connections with community stakeholders
- Investigate paid online advertising
- Improve in-house marketing (e.g., signage, printed materials)
- Assess media reach by demographic factors
- Investigate City of Bismarck library street signage options
- Design outreach event items:
 - stand-up banners
 - tablecloths

EXAMINE CURRENT ENGAGEMENT WITH DIVERSE POPULATIONS

- Identify and reduce barriers to effective use of services
- Engage with Native, minority, immigrant/New American, limited English proficient, LGBTQ+, disabled persons, homeschool, unhoused, low-literacy, and other potentially underserved populations
- Enhance outreach services for older adults

STRENGTHEN POSITIVE PUBLIC PERCEPTION

- Strengthen public relations with taxpayers and local government
- Provide local government and citizens with regular updates on library news
- Offer opportunities to connect with local government, such as Mobile Library and Bookmobile ride-alongs, and facility tours

OUTREACH, CONT.

INCREASE PATRON USAGE OF LIBRARY FACILITIES AND RESOURCES BY NUMBER & DIVERSITY, FOCUSING ON WIDESPREAD AWARENESS OF AVAILABLE SERVICES/RESOURCES

LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION & BURLEIGH COUNTY LIBRARY

OBJECTIVE

TARGET

INCREASE OUTREACH THROUGHOUT COUNTY

- Increase presence at community events
- Increase outreach to rural schools

SEEK SUSTAINABLE FUNDING AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

- Confirm long-term funding for county library services
- Foster supportive relationships with county commissioners
- Provide information about county library services and offer tours to county commissioners
- Increase awareness of the Burleigh County Library through press releases and social media promotion
- Demonstrate city and county library usage by Burleigh County taxpayers via quantifiable data and statistics
- Update the Burleigh County Library name and logo for promotional print, broadcast, and internet media



The bookmobile reaches citizens throughout the entire county. In my area, 10 miles from town, children line up to check out books. Many seniors who do not drive and are homebound can get books through the bookmobile in their neighborhoods, Burleigh County Senior Center, and assisted living centers. I am an avid reader on a budget. The bookmobile and the library are my go-to. I read 2-3 books a week and could not do that without our fabulous bookmobile and library.

**— Lisa B.
Bookmobile Patron**



PARTNERSHIPS

**INCREASE REACH AND EFFICACY OF LIBRARY SERVICES
BY INVESTING IN RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

LIBRARY LEADERSHIP TEAM AND ADMINISTRATION

OBJECTIVE

TARGET

STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS

Strengthen relationships with key community partners including:

- City of Bismarck departments and staff
- Burleigh County departments and staff
- Social service agencies, public and non-profit
- Schools K-12:
 - Private
 - Public
 - Homeschool associations
 - NDSU Extension staff
 - Arts community

CREATE STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

Create relationships with key community partners including:

- Downtowners Association and downtown businesses
- Bismarck-Burleigh County businesses and organizations
- Community leaders of underserved populations



Libraries are an essential cornerstone for any community. At its core, this public institution connects any willing individual with accurate, accessible, and free educational resources. Our library, which is open to all citizens, offers a myriad of services and eliminates any and all obstacles to accessing information. Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library prepares and empowers our citizens to be successful, participating members of our community.

**— Michael Schmitz
Mayor, City of Bismarck**



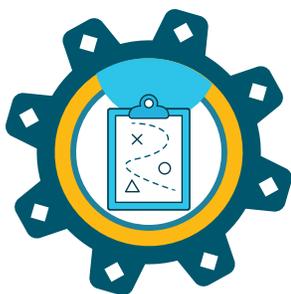
PRESERVE

- Staff (high quality)
- Quality services
- Volunteers
- Leadership
- Print collection
- Teen HQ
- Digital collection
- Community outreach
- Gifted Bean Coffee House
- Adult programs
- Youth programs
- Security presence
- Meeting rooms
- Public computers & Wi-Fi
- In-house publications
- Social media
- “Fines-free” library
- Low-barriers to inclusion
- Public events bulletin board
- Library business resources: scanner, mobile printing, notary, copier, faxing, etc.
- Front lobby and in-house displays
- Burleigh County Library
- Bismarck Library Foundation, Inc.
- Friends of the Bismarck Public Library (FOL)
- FOL used book sales
- Partnerships with other organizations



CREATE

- Shredding day for public
- Way-finding signage
- Volunteer greeters
- Homeschool outreach
- Adult program space
- Meeting room level lights
- Multilingual signage
- Broaden special collections
- Examine collection square footage and layout
- Library 101 class or videos
- Human library/community meal
- Replacement plans for tech hardware
- Mobile hotspots for checkout, Chromebooks
- Advanced tech (editing software, recording studio)
- Potential expansion (consultant – branch study)



CHANGE

- Improve grounds
- Paint and carpet
- Quality of technology resources
- Improved marketing of services
- Examine children’s programming hours and times
- Evaluate use of volunteers
- Increase the visibility of the list of services
- Online catalog access/user friendliness
- Lobby bathrooms/all bathrooms
- Increase number of presentations and tours



SEEK

- Branch support
- New partnerships
- Additional staffing (funding)
- Community social services liaison volunteer stationed at library
- Population study for potential branch



The following groups and individuals contributed to the development of the Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library's 2023-2030 Strategic Plan:



LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Bob Bartosh, President
 Mike LaLonde, Vice President
 Mike Fladeland
 Dianna Kindseth
 Sue Sorlie
 Justin Hughes, Incoming Trustee



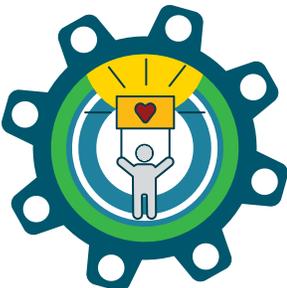
LIBRARY LEADERSHIP TEAM

Christine Kujawa, Library Director
 Elizabeth Jacobs, Assistant Library Director,
Friends of the Bismarck Public Library Staff Liaison
 Lynn Bryntesen, Building and Grounds Manager
 Matthew Engel, Technical Services Associate II
 Troy Hamre, Adult Services Librarian
 Alison Hiatt, Burleigh County Library Associate II
 Matt Hovland, Head of Circulation Services
 Traci Juhala, Head of Youth Services
 Bea Kaiser, Administrative Office Manager
 MacAllistar Kemmer, Adult Services Program Coordinator
 Jana Maher, Youth Services Program Coordinator - Children
 Sarah Matthews, Head of Adult Services
 Keli McDonald, Head of Burleigh County Library
 Laura Rysavy, Youth Services Program Coordinator - Teen
 Kevin R. Tengesdal, Public Information Specialist
 Patrick Trotter, Technology Manager
 Hannah Vanorny, Circulation Services Manager



GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATION

Nancy Guy, Bismarck City Commission
 Kathleen Jones, Burleigh County Commission



LIBRARY FOUNDATION, INC.

Beth Schatz Kaylor, Executive Director
 Kristi Simenson, Office Manager



There is not such a cradle of democracy on earth as the free public library, this republic of letters, where neither rank, office, nor wealth receives the slightest consideration.

— Andrew Carnegie





Photo by Mike LaLonde, Bismarck, July 2022



Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library

CONTACT US

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(701) 355-1480

www.bismarcklibrary.org

HOURS

Monday-Thursday
9:00 AM - 9:00 PM

Friday-Saturday
9:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Sunday
1:00 PM - 6:00 PM

