

**EAST FISHKILL PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT
INTERIM STRATEGIC PLAN**

2023-2025

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Rocco Martino, President**

| | |
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| Traci Suppa | Michael Nolan |
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**LIBRARY DIRECTOR
Gloria Goverman**

-- EAST FISHKILL COMMUNITY LIBRARY MISSION --

Provide residents of East Fishkill access to information and recreation fostered by ever improving collections, technology, and programming supported by a helpful, knowledgeable staff in order to bolster the cultural, social, and economic literacy of our community.

-- ENVISIONED FUTURE (VISION) --

The Library will be a vibrant community hub where people can meet and share, or engage in solitary pursuits. We will strive to reach the residents of East Fishkill wherever, whenever, and however they need us, offering the best of the virtual and tangible worlds to serve their needs.

-- CORE VALUES --

ACCESSIBILITY

As an entity financed by residents of the Town of East Fishkill, we view the Library – its building, collections, and staff – as community assets tasked to provide services to as many residents as possible.

WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE AND COMFORT

The Library will strive to make everyone welcome, valued, and respected. It will provide a comfortable and safe place in which both patrons and staff spend time, based on principles of mutual respect.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Staff and Trustees will strive to understand the needs of constituents by maintaining multiple channels of dialog with the public.

INNOVATION

Staff and Trustees will continually work to create and adopt ideas and practices that will most effectively and efficiently serve our community.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Board of Trustees distributed its first comprehensive Strategic Plan in 2005. This document guided an 18-month planning and implementation process aimed at transforming the longtime Free Association Library into a Public Library District, which was voted into reality November, 2006. The Plan went through minor modification and updating in 2007.

In late 2009, the Board sought to update the Plan in a way that would both envision a three-year strategic growth path, and allow for annual implementation plans to contribute to that path. A Spring 2010 workshop that included Board members and representatives of Staff and Friends resulted in a new plan that was refined by the Board's Strategic Planning Task Force.

That process was repeated in Summer 2015 with an extended, two-day workshop that added a community member to the participants, after which a new Strategic Planning Task Force was formed to produce the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan.

By the end of 2019, efforts began on a new Strategic Plan that would guide the East Fishkill Library from 2020-2023. Before a new plan could be put to paper, the COVID-19 Pandemic took effect, temporarily closing the library, and changing all projections and plans that the Board had envisioned for the institution's near future.

In late 2022, in a changed environment, the Board of Trustees revisited a new Strategic Plan. A patron survey kick-started the process to understand the new needs of the East Fishkill community, the public perception of the library, and the ways in which the library could serve the town.

In early 2023, the Board learned of a new development that would once again significantly change the library – the retirement of its long-serving director. In anticipation of a new director coming on in early 2024, bringing their own unique skills and strategies, the Board decided to draft this Interim Strategic Plan to guide the library through a short term of roughly 18 months.

After this time, the new library director will be in the position long enough to be a knowledgeable and active participant in the creation of a long-term strategic plan for 2026-2029.

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

In 2023, three significant forces are shaping the future of the EFCL. Strategic goals in this plan account for, and adapt to, these forces of change.

1. Post-Pandemic Community Expectations

Among the many things that changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022) and the resulting quarantine was the way in which the EF community utilized and engaged with the library and its services. For example, the marked increased use of digital resources filled the need for content and decreased the need to visit the library in person.

As the “new normal” of post-pandemic life continues to unfold through 2023 and beyond, the library aspires to adapt and change to best meet the community’s needs. To that end, the library conducted a patron survey in the summer of 2022 to take the pulse of what library users want and need going forward.

The primary findings from this survey indicated a desire for more programming for all ages, up-to-date computers for patron use, and for more space to do work. Also noteworthy was an increased use of digital resources, and an appreciation for the library staff.

2. The Need to Maintain an Aging Physical Space

The current building used as the East Fishkill Community Library was built in 1988, with an extension added in 1999. As the building and grounds approach the 40-year mark, updates to and maintenance of the physical plant and its systems have been at the forefront of the Board’s attention – and this will continue over the next several years.

Additionally, considerations of space use – and alterations to the current layout – continue to be discussed by the director and board. Following the patron survey, and the expressed desire for more programming, it is time to renew our focus on how to use both the interior and exterior spaces to best serve the public.

All of this comes at a time when the public’s need for “third places” is increasing, while the actual availability of these no-cost community spaces is decreasing. As stewards of the EFCL, the Board of Trustees has a duty to preserve the physical health of the library campus for long-term community use.

3. Leadership Transition and Staffing Changes

In the foreseeable future, there will be a new library director taking the helm from Gloria Goverman as she retires. Ms. Goverman leaves big shoes to fill, having served in the role for 19 years. Her work has left an indelible footprint on the library’s operations, and its much broader role and reputation in the local community.

With new leadership inevitably comes a time of acclimation and adjustment, and potentially more day-to-day involvement from the Board of Trustees. However, the library will also benefit from new ideas and approaches introduced by the new director.

Additionally, the staffing structure continues to evolve as the needs change, with more coverage needed for children’s programming, and less needed for reference services.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Community Needs and Engagement

Increase the breadth and depth of residents' awareness of library resources. Increase use of library facility, and meet the desire for more programming. Increase amount of digital resources to meet increased demand.

Considerations:

- Continuously seek to understand constituencies' needs, especially those who are under-represented among current users.
- Identify different audiences, segmenting by needs; target selected audience segments who have high impact (heavy users, frequent voters) and potential impact.
- Continue to use social media and email (newsletters) to engage the public and strengthen relationships.
- Continued, ongoing positive relations with, and support of, the Friends of the Library

Success Factors:

Examine data for the following indicators, and consider on balance:

- Increase in library cards issued year over year
- Increase in circulation year over year
- Increase in visitors year over year
- Increase in active library users year over year
- Increase in number of programs year over year
- Increase in the variety of programs to meet the needs of a diverse population
- Increase in the number of voters, and of "yes" voters year over year
- Increase in collaborative partnerships that support strategic goals year over year
- Positive input and feedback from future patron surveys
- Positive public reception to and perception of future library director

STRATEGIC GOALS, CONTINUED

Physical Plant – Maintenance and Renovation

Evaluate long term needs and more immediate needs of building and property, using external resources if necessary, including the 2023 facility condition survey and plan by Mauri Architects PC. Implement short term changes and make plans to undertake larger and long-term improvements.

Considerations:

- Design ways to better serve key audiences, i.e with individual study/quiet space, children and teen space, community group space
- Better utilize underused spaces such as rotunda, courtyard
- Expand storage, especially for book donations
- Enhance noise abatement, especially children's center

Success Factors:

- The building has been reconfigured to provide storage, quiet and other spaces as determined by need
- Plan for future space needs for programming, community groups, patron work space, children's area, and collection space
 - Identified needs include (but not limited to) renovation to bathrooms, back office, and kitchen
- Engage architect to create a space use plan to meet future needs
- Identify funding sources to support upgrades and major renovations to physical plant
- Regularly-scheduled walk-through inspections by Trustee committee for physical plant oversight

STRATEGIC GOALS, CONTINUED

Financial Resources

Build resources necessary to enable implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Considerations:

- Maintain current funding sources and fund balance
- Identify appropriate grants and write and submit applications for them
- Identify and effectively pursue other funding sources; e.g. planned giving, bonds
- Evaluate future staffing needs based on leadership and staffing structure changes
- Continue to grow relationship with Friends organization

Success Factors:

- Finances are not a barrier to achieving strategic plan
- YOY increase in the number of applications submitted for grants
- The reserve fund balance is maintained at an appropriate level as determined by board policy

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Organization Plan - This consists of the Strategic Plan and the Operating Plan.

Strategic Plan - This consists of the Mission Statement and Strategic Areas, including for each Strategic Area a Statement of Direction and Success Factors. A Vision and Core Values can be added to the Strategic Plan, if desired.

Operating Plan (Business Plan) - This consists of the Perennial Goals and annual action plans for both the Strategic Areas and Perennial Goals.

Vision - This describes the ultimate position of the organization in its environment.

Core Values - These describe the way individuals within the organization interact with the world and among each other. These set the organization's cultural guidepost.

Mission Statement - This describes the organization's purpose; why the organization exists.

Strategic Areas - These identify areas of activity which are strategic in nature and most likely require a new emphasis or change in emphasis, new resources, and/or a change in direction.

Statement of Direction - This is a brief statement which describes the direction of a Strategic Area and the reason it was chosen.

Success Factors - These are phrases or statements that describe conditions, which, when substantially completed, constitute achievement of the Strategic Areas. (Also may be applied to Perennial Goals.)

Perennial Goals - These are broad statements that describe key competencies of the organization, and when successfully executed, provide the ongoing support to the organization and its ability to operate effectively.

Note: Perennial Goal achievement may be described by manuals, benchmarks, standard operating procedures, success factors and /or a combination of these.

Annual Action Plans - These are measurable, definable, time bounded statements or phrases which must be achieved during the fiscal year to advance the Strategic Plan and Operating Plan.