



Appomattox Regional Library System

LONG RANGE PLANNING REPORT

GOALS and OBJECTIVES

FY 2022 - 2025

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INTRODUCTION

This document summarizes a year-long strategic planning process (September 2020 – September 2021) during a highly stressful period in the Appomattox Regional Library System’s existence. The entire process had to be completed remotely due to the COVID-19 virus and restrictions in place for meeting in person. The Appomattox Regional Library System (ARLS) was required to use Zoom meetings and online surveys to develop this plan (the Plan).

The purpose of the planning was to assess programs, services, and staffing, and build greater awareness of ARLS’s role in its community of the City of Hopewell and the Counties of Dinwiddie and Prince George. The expectation is that ARLS will use this plan and its goals and objectives to measure how well it is meeting the community’s interests and informational needs and to adapt and adjust the plan moving forward to address changing circumstances. This plan updates the previous 2016 – 2021 strategic plan and contains the goals and objectives for library development during the next three years as well as revised Vision and Mission.

A 12-person planning committee developed the plan. The committee consisted of the library director and eleven community members of various backgrounds and relationships to the library. The committee included two board of trustees members, one member of a Friends of the Library group, three representatives from community partners of the library and six of the library staff to offer information on youth and adult services already provided, staffing and branch services.

Public libraries continue to face transformational ways in how people access information and these continuous evolution of informational seeking behavior will continue into the foreseeable future. The library patron moves from online resources and available social media as one loses favor and another becomes popular. Therefore, it is impossible for ARLS to rely on the most current method for sharing information as it is subject to change steadily or suddenly. However, those patrons or potential patrons reached recognize the variety of resources ARLS offers, use the resources and tools, and interact with each other to thrive in today’s society. Patrons agree ARLS brings great value to their lives and their communities. Beyond books and public computers, the library continues to be a place where people gather to explore, interact, and imagine.

VISION and MISSION

VISION: *A community that is enlightened, empowered, and enriched.*

MISSION: *The Appomattox Regional Library System fosters lifelong learning; provides open access to information, entertainment, and technology; cultivates the exchange of ideas; inspires personal growth; and encourages community engagement and gathering.*

CUSTOMERS and SERVICES

At the time of this plan's preparation, numerous regular services of the library had been suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. ARLS worked to reopen its doors to the general public but was unable to reopen all locations. Also, social distancing requirements were put in place and remain in place as of the end of the planning period.

Notwithstanding the limitations during the planning period, ARLS remained committed to offering services to the same customer groups and types of services as a full service library system for the community it serves.

Organizational customers and services typically offered are identified as follows:

<u>CUSTOMERS:</u>	<u>SERVICES</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Birth to 4 years● Pre K to Elementary● Middle to High School● College● Adult● Senior (Older Adults)● Homeschoolers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Storytime/Plays and Shows● Reading Programs● Teen Space/Programs● Pizza and Poetry● Sign Language● SOL-related programs● Life-Long Learning● Arts & Crafts● Exercise

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Job Seekers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collections-Books/ Movies/ CDs ● Computer Access ● Gathering Place-meeting rooms ● Training
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The planning committee had to work from the public survey responses collected in the early part of the planning period as the only information on ARLS's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges. Focus groups and one-on-one interviews were not possible during the past year. The survey responses demonstrated strong support for the library from its regular users and many non-library users. However, the surveys also demonstrated ARLS still faces weaknesses and challenges in the public not being aware of the services the library offers, not being aware of the library itself, and a willingness of the public to perform their own research, gather information, or access entertainment online from non-library resources.

GOALS and OBJECTIVES

The following Goals were derived from the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges determined by the committee. The critical issues and goals adopted to create the long range plan are:

1. **Fosters Lifelong Learning:**

- A. Objective 1 - The library will provide programming for all youth age categories each quarter in each jurisdiction.
- B. Objective 2 - The library will provide adult programming, whether in person or online, on topics of interest to the community.
- C. Objective 3 - The library will develop partnerships with community organizations to provide adult programming quarterly.
- D. Objective 4 - The library will actively promote its Book-a-Librarian service as established by the library's procedure.

2. **Provides Open Access to Information, Entertainment, and Technology:**

- A. Objective 1 - The library will increase availability of technology internally and for circulation to the community.
- B. Objective 2 - The library will actively promote community involvement in collection development.

- C. Objective 3 - The library will actively promote online educational resources offered by the library.

3 Cultivates Exchange of Ideas:

- A. Objective 1 - The library will provide adult programming on diverse topics.
- B. Objective 2 - The library will develop displays, online presentations or informational web pages on diverse topics.

4 Encourages Community Engagement and Gathering:

- A. Objective 1 – The library will encourage community participation through the library with other community organizations to support the needs and interests of the community.
- B. Objective 2 - The library will develop additional meeting and programming spaces through partnerships with other community organizations.
- C. Objective 3 – The library will encourage outside groups and organizations to use the library’s available gathering space as set by the library’s policies.

The Goals would be achieved through their respective objectives and measured and reported to the board of trustees each October during the plan. Rather than establish a fixed plan for a fixed number of years, the committee chose instead to set the plan period for only three years. However, the committee also determined to encourage the board of trustees to reevaluate the goals and objectives each year and consider a rolling plan. Under a rolling plan, the board of trustees could determine a goal or objective to be no longer relevant or obsolete and change the goals and objectives to meet the changing services. The initial objectives with measurable goals are:

GOAL 1: Lifelong Learning.	
OBJECTIVE	MEASUREMENT / ACTIONS
A. The library will provide programming for all youth age categories each quarter in each jurisdiction.	The library will track the number of programs by location and age group targeted during the year and track the attendance for each program. Staff will adapt program topics through the plan’s schedule as needed to address the interest of the general public. Measured by program’s location, target market and attendance.

B. The library will provide adult programming, whether in person or online, on topics of interest to the community.	The library will track the subject matter, location and attendance for adult programs offered during the plan's period. The library staff and board of trustees will review the diversity of topics offered during the previous year and develop suggestions for unrepresented issues or groups within the community. Measured by program diversity and attendance.
C. The library will actively promote online educational resources offered by the library.	Track the number of promotions, advertising, print and social media efforts made to promote the various online resources offered during the year. Measured by number of promotions and number of uses of the online resources during the year.
D. The library will actively promote its Book-a-Librarian service as established by the library's procedure.	Track the number of Book-a-Librarian sessions and topics addressed each year during the plan. Reporting would also include efforts to promote the service and locations where the service is provided. Measured by the number of sessions provided.

GOAL 2: Open Access to Information, Entertainment, and Technology.

OBJECTIVE	MEASUREMENT / ACTIONS
A. The library will increase availability of technology internally and for circulation to the community.	The library will monitor changes in technology such as software, hardware and internet access resources and implement new or improved technology as permitted by the library's budget. The library will strive to maintain its technology plan and update technology used by the public on a regular schedule. The objective will be measured by changes or additions of technology offered the public and reported in the director's report to the board in October on changes in technology resources.
B. The library will actively promote community involvement in collection development.	The library will develop or improve tools that allow the patrons to recommend or contribute works that are to be added to the collection. The library staff will assess the state of the collection on a regular basis to reflect the interests of the community. The objective will be measured by the number of recommendations contributed by patrons and reported in the director's report in October on the number of items added and removed from the collection and the number added as a result of community recommendations.

C. The library will develop partnerships with community organizations to provide adult programming quarterly	Track the number and variety of partnerships developed in the community and the programs presented as a result of each partnership. The expectation is not that each year will see additional partnerships as potential partnership groups within each community may be limited. The objective is to develop a consistent partnership program within the communities, whether with existing or with new community partners. The objective will be measured by the number of partnership programs per community/jurisdiction and attendance at the programs.
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GOAL 3: Cultivates Exchange of Ideas.

OBJECTIVE	MEASUREMENT / ACTIONS
A. The library will provide adult programming on diverse topics.	The library will offer staff developed programming or programming developed in partnership with community organizations on diverse topics of interest to the community. The objective will be measured by the number of adult programs offered, variety of topics addressed and attendance at each program.
B. The library will develop displays, online presentations or informational web pages on diverse topics.	Library staff will explore the best format for reaching the widest audience for displays and online presentations and track topics and usage (e.g. circulation from book displays; number of views of online presentations). The objective will be measured by amount of usage.

GOAL 4: Encourages Community Engagement and Gathering.

OBJECTIVE	MEASUREMENT / ACTIONS
A. The library will encourage community participation through the library with other community organizations to support the needs and interests of the community.	The library will continue its efforts to develop partnerships with community organizations such as the Red Cross and local Recreation & Parks departments to present joint programming both inside library space and at third party locations. The objective will be measured by the number of partnership programs presented and the attendance at such programming.

<p>B. The library will develop additional meeting and programming spaces through partnerships with other community organizations.</p>	<p>The library will seek alternative spaces in the community for presentation of library programming or promotion of library services and materials. The objective will be measured by the number of contacts the library makes with community and governmental organizations and the spaces outside of the traditional library structures used during the plan year.</p>
<p>C. The library will encourage outside groups and organizations to use the library's available gathering space as set by the library's policies.</p>	<p>The library will survey local businesses, churches, and organizations to determine the interest in or need for meeting spaces. The library will develop promotional materials and continue to measure the meeting room usage. The library will also identify patterns of usage and groups. The objective will be measured by the recommendations or responses received and the development of meeting spaces in the community.</p>

APPENDICES

ARLS OVERVIEW

The Appomattox Regional Library System (ARLS) fosters life-long learning, the availability of information, and the exchange of ideas using library resources and emerging technology.

HISTORY: The name was chosen because the Appomattox River flows through each of the three localities that we serve. Library service began in Hopewell-Prince George area in 1930 when Thomas B. Robertson established a Library Association for persons interested in forming a library. In 1931, the city formally took over operation of the library, with Mrs. Maude Langhorne Nelson as its first librarian. The John Randolph Library, as it was then known, was located in the previous State Planters Bank Building on West Poythress Street. In 1957, the library was moved to the annex of the Municipal Building and the name was changed to honor the first librarian, Maude Langhorne Nelson. In 1974, Prince George and Dinwiddie Counties joined the City of Hopewell to form the Appomattox Regional Library System.

The Appomattox Regional Library System (ARLS) operates eight library locations, four in Prince George County, three in Dinwiddie County, and one in the City of Hopewell:

Prince George County - Burrowsville Library, Disputanta Library, Carson Depot Library, and Prince George Library

Dinwiddie County - Dinwiddie Library, McKenney Library, and Rohoic Library

Hopewell - The Maude Langhorne Nelson Library

PLANNING PARTICIPANTS

Appomattox Regional Library System Board of Trustees

The Library Board of Trustees is the governing body of the library system responsible for adopting policies necessary for the operation of the regional library system. There are nine volunteer trustees appointed by the respective City Council or Boards of Supervisors. Three trustees are appointed from Hopewell and three each from Prince George and Dinwiddie. Trustees serve four-year terms, with no more than two successive terms. During the planning process, there were changes in the members of the board. This is reflected in the list of trustees.

Hopewell:

Ann Williams
Dave Harless
Susan Eliades

Dinwiddie County

Martha Sykes
Carly Baskerville
Carol King
Sandra Ruffin

Prince George County

Juanita Thorne
Lillian Boyd
William Thomas
Amanda Binford

Planning Committee for Strategic Plan

The Planning Committee met regularly by Zoom to discuss the objectives, initiatives, measurements, and actions of the plan. The planning committee also worked on updating the organizational mission and vision.

Brian Manning, Regional Library Director

JoAnne Ortiz, Chair of Friends of the Library-Dinwiddie

Carly Baskerville, Board of Trustees

Ann Williams, Board of Trustees

Ann Easterling, Community Representative, John Randolph Foundation

Eliza Lamb, Community Representative, LambArts, Inc.

Tabatha Martinez, Community Representative, Hopewell Recreation & Parks

Sarah Finch, Youth Services Manager, ARLS

Elizabeth Trop, Adult Services Librarian, ARLS

Ginger Mauler, Branch Services Manager, ARLS

Chris Wiegard, Assistant Library Director

Nicole Coleman, Administrative & Personnel Services Manager, ARLS

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Strategic Planning Survey

Response Statistics

	Count	Percent
Complete	66	89.20%
Partial	8	10.80%
Disqualified	0	0.00%
Totals	74	

1. I usually use this location as my library.

Value	Percent	Count
Hopewell Library	30.60%	19
Burrowsville Library	1.60%	1
Carson Depot Library	4.80%	3
Dinwiddie Library	22.60%	14
McKenney Library	4.80%	3
Prince George Library	30.60%	19
Rohoic Library	4.80%	3
	Totals	62

2. I last visited an ARLS location:

Value	Percent	Count
Within the past week	27.70%	18
Within the past 6 months	41.50%	27
Within the past year	23.10%	15
It's been more than a year	6.20%	4
I never visit any ARLS location.	1.50%	1
	Totals	65

3. What brings you to your library?

Value	Percent	Count
To check out books, CDs or DVDs	73.40%	47
To use the computers	7.80%	5
To attend programs	6.30%	4
Other	12.50%	8
	Totals	64

COMMUNITY COMMENTS (Regular Library Users)

4. What other services could your library offer the community?

- Not sure of that, but love the art displays at the PG Library.
- Due to covid19, it would be nice if there are free books for children to read online
- More Afrocentric periodicals and other ethnic materials
- More yoga classes
- Textbook rental
- I enjoy free classes and learning opportunities.
- I can't think of any at this time.
- Test proctoring. Virtual learning spaces.
- Educational classes. Teaching people how to use some of the fast evolving technology
- Book-Mobile Outdoor movies after pandemic and weather permitting.
- Can I donate books to Burrowsville?
- Libraries already offer a variety of services to the community. Perhaps fine tuning anyone of the many fine programs already offered
- Some more programs for kids would be nice, and something parents could do with children, like family movie-and-craft nights or board game clubs, those would be great. And I know my parents would love some classic movie evenings for senior citizens to socialize once Covid-19 is past.
- Really think our library is the best
- More classes
- I used to take children to story hour and check out books at the Enhancement Center. I will be glad when they open again even if it's for curbside service only.
- More book fairs. Adult computer software education. Arts and crafts Meet local Authors work with local senior citizens/retirees to provide story time for children. Offer delivery/pick up of books to people who do not have transportation - you may be able to find volunteers willing to do so. Children's contest such as best painting, craft item, history essay, etc. - you may be able to check with local businesses for donations of prizes. There are so many other ways to become more involved in the community and to draw more people into the library. Book club meetings on the lawn. Story time for children on the lawn. Adult art - painting classes on the lawn.
- Longer hours after the pandemic

5. What other comments do you have (What is the library doing well; what areas could we improve; How has the library helped you)?

- The ARLS Libraries are beautiful in most cases and all have super friendly and informative staff.
- Open the Carson Library.
- The library has been very essential to me and my family when we didn't have a computer. It also helped when the children had school projects
- Very pleased with everything about the Dinwiddie branch. It would be nice to have another day of opening before 3.
- More programs maybe some talks from lived history in our area and the city of Hopewell
- I appreciate being able to donate books, especially when a family member that was a book lover passed leaving many books behind.
- When open fully we are pleased with children programs. We wish you all could open these programs again using social distancing.

- I visit weekly when the library is open. Have missed desperately during Covid
- I feel that the library personnel is very rude when I am in the building and checking out.
- Enjoy the yoga class. Can't wait to get back to normal again. Open at 9am at least once or twice a week.
- I have always received excellent service and assistance by phone as well as in person.
- Due to the COVID situation, there was no opportunity to use the library. Without a special situation, the library system does a wonderful service to the community. And, I do use the WiFi while there to update my laptop & iPhone. I enjoy the staff.
- I like the curbside pick up option. I wish the site was more easily accessible on a mobile device where I could browse. Instead of always looking by title. I love the Carson location, we just moved to the area 2 years ago and it was the first place we went. The librarians are always so nice.
- Great customer service and staff in each location.
- I love the library and think it a essential service for the community
- Enjoy the friendly atmosphere and the librarian knowing my tastes and making suggestions of authors, etc I might like to try.
- I really appreciate having a branch of the ARLS located in my local area. Staff has always been friendly and helpful. The atmosphere is very calming and relaxing.
- I think its a beautiful library. Plenty of computers so almost always easy to use at least in mornings. Very happy there is a photo copier, book store, bulletin board to look for news or events. Like the library booklet announcing upcoming classes etc. Have enjoy the classes and lectures held there in past. Excellent job.
- Since I'm disabled I really appreciate the curbside service at the Hopewell Library that's always cheerfully performed for me. ** On another occasion my card had expired, a nice lady informed my son, updated my info and I was able to check the book out next day. ** All the employees I've encountered at Hopewell the branch are always very kind.
- Wonderful because it's local & Ricky is super helpful.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS (Non-users of ARLS Services)

4. What services does your current library offer that Appomattox Regional Library System does not provide?

- None
- Better hours and open locations
- More selection of books.
- Not sure.
- I just indicated that I use the Hopewell library- I don't understand this question.
- n/a
- I use an ARLS library.
- N/A

5. If you said you did not use the library, why don't you use the library system?

- I think the question above is not worded correctly. I use the library, but not another library besides The Hopewell branch of the ARLS.
- honestly always forget they are around.
- I rent/buy books through Amazon/Kindle

6. What services or materials would bring you to the Appomattox Regional Library System?

- I'm not really sure. I find just about everything I need online from home.
- Already go and love it
- Wifi access, book readings, cultural events and social activities
- not sure. Books these days surely don't matter to people.
- There's a great selection! I also use the holds feature a lot.
- Hours that make it easy to visit the library.
- Books for my self, husband and children.
- More audio books - or just trade them around from one library to another. I know everyone wants to read the latest best seller but I think it's important that classics always be included in the collection.
- If my printer was inoperable and I needed to print something, I would visit the library.
- e-books and book clubs
- Books, magazines, dvds,cds, computer,printers, fax, bookstore, meetings, lectures.
- I think the offerings are great at ARLS. If I had to pick something, I would ask for more new releases and/or maybe a section with celebrity book club picks.
- Better more consistent hours

7. What do you think of when someone mentions the public library?

- A quiet space with lots of books.
- Great resources
- Knowledge
- Good use.
- We love it
- Books and reading.
- Access.
- Books and good resources for the city or county it's located in. Also activities for kids!
- Small. Can I request books to check out to be sent to the Dinwiddie library?
- Reading good books.
- Free books for all to read!
- I love the library - it's the best local government service - the library is the heart of the community.
- The Hopewell Library is a very pretty library.
- free books and resources on a variety of different topics, community space, specific programming, book genre specific events
- A wonderful resource.
- Borrowing materials for free for a period of time. My kids love the library.
- A great array of resources available to all community members.
- Books and movies