



STRATEGIC PLAN

2022-2025

Mahomet Public Library District

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THE LIBRARY IN 2021

CHANGES SINCE 2018

The library's previous strategic plan was written in 2018 and outlined several ambitious goals and objectives. Based on this plan, we made many positive changes and additions to our facility, our programming, and our services, despite the global COVID-19 pandemic that surprised us all in 2020.

Facility, Furniture, and Equipment Changes

Offsite Storage: We rented space in a former school building to store books and DVDs that we would otherwise have had to weed from the collection due to our limited shelf space in the library.

Electronic Sign: We installed an electronic messaging system at the front of our property and it has been extremely successful for reaching community members with announcements and program promotions.

Help Desk: We set up a temporary greeter station for pandemic reasons. This station was so popular that we purchased a desk and equipment to make it a permanent help desk/staff workstation.

Wi-Fi Changes: We added a Wi-Fi access point to the parking lot so people can use the internet when we are closed. This originally addressed the community's need for internet access during the months we had limited hours due to the pandemic, but we will continue to offer it going forward.

New Programs and Services

Literacy: We added three early literacy initiatives: (1) the nationwide 1000 Books before Kindergarten, (2) Monday Morning Readers, a weekly read-to-an-adult time in the summer, and (3) Firm Foundations. This last initiative provides programs and support for parents and caregivers and sends a free birthday book to each participating child aged 0-5.

Adult Programming: We added an Adult Programming Coordinator, who created several new popular adult programs, including book clubs, craft programs, and our new and popular "Try Something New Year" programs added to our January line up each year.

Outreach: We took the library out into the community by providing a weekly pop-up library at Candlewood Estates during the summer lunch time offered by area churches.

Pandemic-Driven Changes: Some programs created in response to pandemic limitations were so popular that we will keep them in our regular rotation of offerings. These include our make-and-take craft kits for all ages and the option of using the videoconferencing platform Zoom for certain events, such as our book clubs.

Staffing Changes

Circulation Manager: We promoted one of our experienced team members to the full time Circulation Manager position, focusing on activities and procedures related to our patron experiences when they use the library.

Adult Programming Coordinator: We added this role to focus on developing programming specifically for adults.

Library Leadership Team: Three team members assist the director in evaluating responses to issues as they arise and vetting new ideas or changes to existing procedures.

Additions to Library Collections

Several new types of materials joined our collection: board games, Roku Streaming Sticks with different streaming services, Wi-Fi hotspots, and Wonderbooks (printed books for children with built-in Playaways). We also took the suggestion of one of our patrons and set up a puzzle share station for people to exchange jigsaw puzzles.

Changes to Simplify and Improve Library Access

In response to the previous strategic plan's direction to reduce barriers to access, we instituted many changes, large and small, that help our patrons access and use the library more easily:

- We established an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion committee to review our policies, procedures, and programming and identify areas where we could improve.
- We eliminated overdue fines and charges for replacement library cards.
- We added the ability to register for library cards online.
- We attached various genre labels to our adult fiction books to make it easier for patrons to browse the collection.
- We rearranged portions of the collection to improve browsing and set up more book displays.
- We created a "Lucky Duck" shelf to improve the chance that patrons can check out popular titles more quickly.
- We reached an intergovernmental agreement with the school district to allow us to provide library cards for students who live in the school district, but not in the library district.

OUR COMMUNITY

Demographic Data

The Mahomet Public Library serves Mahomet Township, including the Village of Mahomet. The community has grown consistently since the library was first opened in 1967.

The 2020 census numbers show some irregularities for the Township population and the library is pursuing avenues to confirm the correct numbers. Because the Village boundaries are almost entirely within the Township, the library board is using Village census data to project community growth and needs.

	2010	2020	Difference	% change
Village population	7,258	9,434*	2,176	29.98%
Township population	12,623	13,697	1,074	8.51%

*The Village annexed neighborhoods in 2019 representing approximately 500 people who were always in the Township, but now also live in the Village

Other Demographics:

- The median income is \$113,261 and 50.2% of adults have a bachelor's degree or higher.
- Non-whites represent 10% of the populations.
- The median age is 37.7 years. Children under the age of 18 represent 26.3% of the population (compared to 22.2% statewide).
- There is no public transportation within the community or connecting the area with other nearby towns. Virtually every household (99.4%) has at least one vehicle and 90.7% have two or more.

Beyond the Numbers

The Mahomet community has a reputation for being educated and economically comfortable. While this is true for a significant percentage of the population, there remain those without access to certain resources the library can provide, such as internet access, educational materials, and foundational programs for young learners. Reaching these community members can present challenges since time, transportation, and desire are necessary to use the library and its resources in a traditional manner.

While the library district's borders match those of Mahomet Township, the library actually serves a larger region. The Mahomet-Seymour School District is much larger than the library district, and includes portions of three other townships, including the town of Seymour. These areas are not served by any other public library; we consider these households to be part of the community we serve, although the library receives no tax revenue from those living outside Mahomet Township.

LIBRARY USAGE

Facility

The library moved into a 13,113 square foot building in July 2010. Before the pandemic, the library received an average of over 77,000 visits per year. Visits declined after March 2020, but returned to normal levels by the end of 2021.

The size of the library is small for the needs of the community. The children's area is often crowded with patrons, the shelves are overcrowded with materials, the demand for study rooms and work areas often exceeds the available spaces, and there limited areas for people to gather.

In December 2020, the library began renting a 700 square foot space in downtown Mahomet to store a portion of the library's materials. This alleviated some of the overcrowding on the shelves at the main facility and allowed us to grow the overall size of the collection.

Collections

The library offers physical and digital materials to the community. As of the end of 2021, the library collections included:

Physical Items		Digital Items		Equipment	
Books	44,547	eBooks	51,854	Roku Streaming Sticks	8
DVDs	3,739	eAudiobooks	17,819	Wi-Fi Hotspots	3
Audiobooks	1,979	eMagazines	3,778	Laptops	6
CDs	1,358				
Board Games	47				

Before the pandemic, library patrons checked out 166,000-168,000 items per year. Fewer materials were checked out beginning March 2020, when library usage decreased overall, but numbers began to improve in the fall of 2021.

Programs

The library offers programs for all ages, but sees the highest participation from children and families. Participation in programs for adults was growing rapidly before the pandemic. As of the end of 2021, the library continued to have limited in-person programming inside the library building, but participation in the take-and-make kits and outdoor programming was strong.

	Participants
FY 18-19	9,610
FY 19-20	9,428
FY 20-21	6,071
July –December 2021	3,167

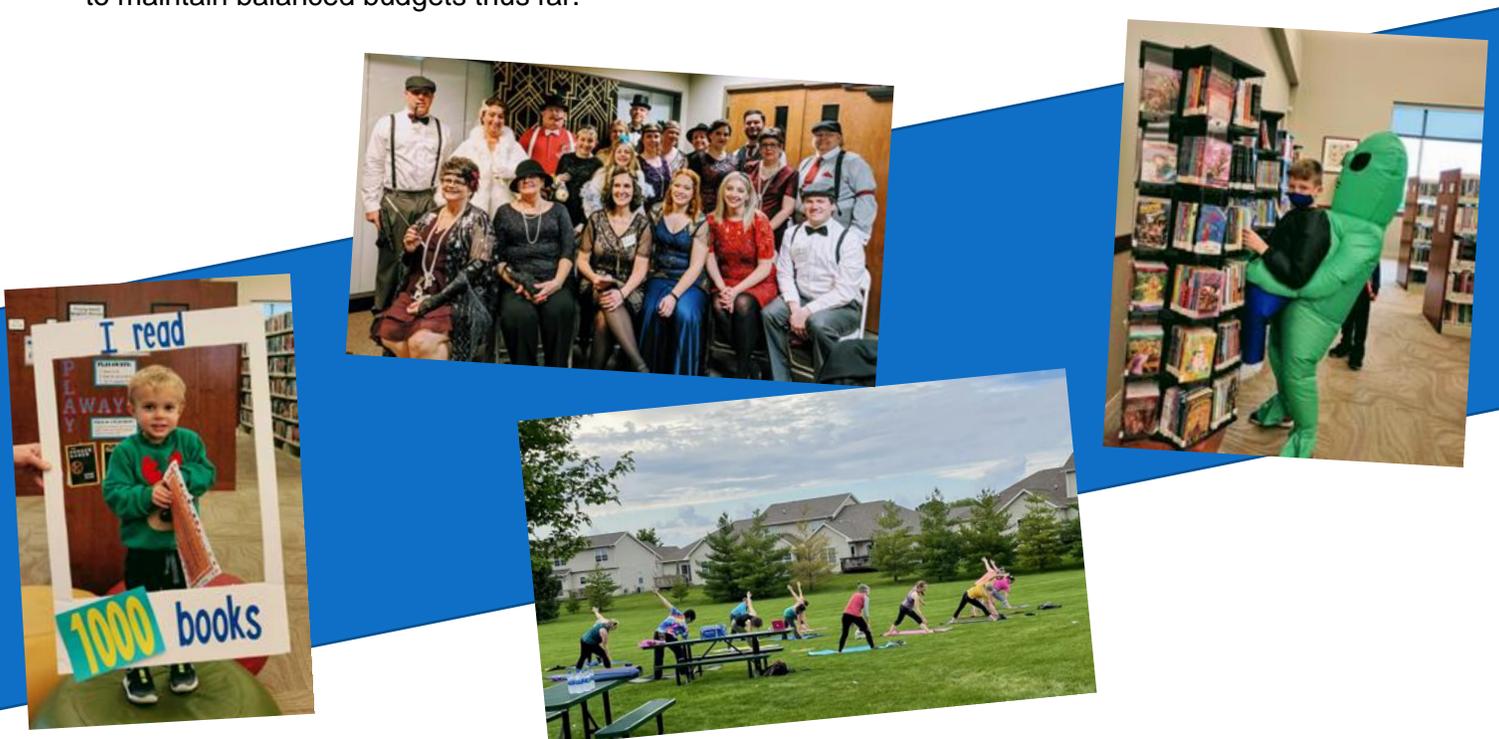
FINANCIAL POSITION

The library's financial position is stable. The library board and leadership team have managed the annual budgets carefully to meet the needs of the community, maintain the current facility, and save for the next expansion without overburdening the community.

Recent and near-term financial pressures include:

- Minimum Wage Increases. The annual increases in the Illinois minimum wage affect the wages paid to library staff and the cost of services involved in maintaining the facility and grounds.
- Inflation and Supply Chain Issues. These affect the cost of materials and supplies.
- Aging Facility. The building, new in 2010, is now old enough to require more repairs, maintenance, and equipment replacement.

Unlike for-profit companies, the library cannot raise prices to compensate for these cost increases, but the overall stability of the library's finances and the generous support of our community have helped us to maintain balanced budgets thus far.



MISSION, VALUES, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

MISSION STATEMENT

Together we create welcoming spaces where all are free to learn, connect, create, and grow.

VALUES STATEMENT

We believe reading improves lives.

We are passionate about literacy and lifelong learning.

We are a welcoming and safe space for everyone.

We ensure access to information for people of all ages, abilities, and means.

We value diversity in our programs, our materials, and our community.

We connect our community to ideas and to people.

We are responsible stewards of public resources.

We love what we do.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Our goals, objectives, and the resulting programs, services, and activities all fall under one or more of our three strategic priorities.

Welcoming

Wherever and however we serve our community -- in our building, out in the community, or in our virtual spaces -- we strive to create a welcoming and safe space for everyone. We want to make using our library as simple as possible and make every encounter a positive one.

Learning, Creating, and Growing

Every decision we make about items for our collection, methods of providing information, and library programming focuses on helping our community members learn more about their world, create their own contributions, and grow as individuals.

Connecting

We see our library as a place to connect people to people, people to information, and people to their community. Our programs help people see new perspectives, learn something new, or simply enjoy activities together. We are a place where people can gather for these purposes.

GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

WELCOMING

Maintain an efficient, clean, safe, and welcoming facility for work, study, library programs, and community meetings.

- Maintain the facility and grounds
 - Annually inspect the building and grounds with library staff and the board’s building and grounds committee.
 - Budget sufficient funds to cover maintenance and repairs.
 - Establish a method for staff members and patrons to report problems with the facility or grounds.
- Make the facility easier for patrons to use
 - Assess the arrangement of shelves and furnishings annually and make changes as needed.
 - Update directional and informational signage.
 - Assess the arrangement of the collection annually and make changes as needed.
 - Review the layout of the facility annually for American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance and accessibility.
- Ensure the facility is safe for patrons and staff
 - Post emergency exit paths and storm safety information.
 - Review safety procedures regularly with staff members.
 - Assess staff work areas at least annually for potential safety issues.

Equip and encourage library staff to provide excellent service to our patrons.

- Define our service philosophy and integrate it across all library programs and services.
- Provide regular training for staff members in a variety of patron-support skills.
- Create and maintain written procedures and patron service protocols.
- Empower staff members to provide proactive service and try new solutions to meeting patron needs.

Maintain patron-centered policies and procedures that reduce barriers and simplify access to library materials and services.

- Establish a schedule for policies to be reviewed by the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) committee, the Library Leadership Team, and the board’s Policy Committee.
- Establish methods for patrons to provide feedback.
- Review our “We Had to Say No” list quarterly to identify opportunities to provide new services or change existing procedures.
- Identify common patron questions and issues related to library materials and services and create support materials or programs to address them.

Anticipate and provide access to technology that best serves our patrons' needs.

- Maintain the library's existing technology and repair, replace, or upgrade as needed.
- Identify technology-related obstacles or bottlenecks and make changes where possible.
- Improve patron access to library services through mobile devices.
- Regularly review leading-edge technologies and technology-related solutions used by other libraries and adopt cost-effective solutions that work for our library and patrons.
- Support patron use of technology by providing assistance and training.

Enhance our library facility by increasing the existing footprint and providing new spaces for connection and community.

- Hire an architect to create a concept design and cost estimate.
- Apply for a Public Library Construction Grant.
- Create a fundraising plan for funding the expansion.
- Evaluate the feasibility of creating an outdoor program space before the construction of a building addition.

LEARNING, CREATING, AND GROWING

Promote literacy, a love of reading, and the joy of learning throughout our community.

- Actively engage with parents to promote early literacy among children ages 0-5.
- Provide literacy-based continuing education to caregivers within the community.
- Offer programs and services to support literacy for all ages, partnering with community agencies to provide services to meet identified needs.
- Promote resources to help patrons in every age group discover their next great read.
- Promote reading and library resources outside of the library.
- Support book clubs both within and outside of the library.
- Create library displays that feature resources to support a variety of interests.
- Make the library a portal to learning opportunities and resources throughout the community.

Provide a variety of materials and resources in physical and digital formats.

- Optimize the library collection by:
 - Continually assessing the collection, adding and removing items as needed and moving others to off-site storage; and
 - Improving usage analysis to provide materials most desired by the community.
- Work with school librarians and teachers to ensure we are providing materials and resources that support the curricula.
- Make the collection more browsable and attract attention to underused materials.
- Research and consider creation of a "library of things" (items besides books, audiobooks, and movies) based on community needs and interests.

Promote greater information literacy throughout our community.

- Become a go-to source for accurate, unbiased information about local, national, and world affairs.
- Provide programs, materials, displays, and online resources for our patrons that will encourage information literacy and help patrons identify and access relevant and trustworthy sources of information.
- Leverage existing programs and materials from other sources.
- Provide focused staff training on information literacy.
- Offer opportunities for the public to learn from original sources about issues in the community.

Offer programs for all ages and interests that encourage creative endeavors and personal growth.

- Offer age-specific and all-ages programming for a variety of purposes, including entertainment, education, creative endeavors, and opportunities for personal growth.
- Identify community programming needs and seek to fill them by:
 - Promoting programs offered by other community organizations,
 - Partnering with other community organizations to create new programs, or
 - Creating new library programs.
- Foster a sense of the library as a community space by establishing activities for each age group, including children, teens, adults, and seniors.
- Provide culturally-aware programs that represent a diverse range of voices and viewpoints.
- Develop programs that encourage and promote the use of library materials and services.

CONNECTING

Increase our library's role in the community.

- Seek new ways to take the library and library resources out into the community.
- Expand partnerships with organizations and individuals in the community.
- Hold community-wide events in partnership with other organizations.

Connect community members to information and services they need.

- Promote community programs, services, and organizations.
- Provide space for social services to meet with clients at the library.
- Host community forums and speakers on subjects of interest to the community.
- Create a welcome packet for those new to the community.

Help build strong relationships between community members.

- Provide a forum for community conversations.
- Include spaces in the library expansion that allow community members to meet and connect.
- Offer programs that provide opportunities for social interaction.
- Connect people to other people with common interests.

Involve community members meaningfully in the mission of the library.

- Significantly increase ongoing opportunities for individuals to volunteer at the library.
- Create a structured teen volunteer program.
- Develop new avenues for fundraising for general library expenses and specific projects and programs.
- Explore the creation of a library foundation, with a board made up of community members.
- Encourage and train community members to participate in advocacy for libraries.

Expand promotional efforts and develop new marketing strategies.

- Improve communication with existing library users.
- Identify and connect with new audiences.
- Create a formal marketing plan.
- Include opportunities for interactive communication in our marketing.



LIBRARY EXPANSION

In 2007, library consultants recommended a 24,000 square foot library facility to meet the needs of the growing Mahomet community. Voters approved a referendum to build a 13,000 square foot building. The current library is well used and its only problem is its small size:

- The children's area is small and often crowded with children, families, and caregivers.
- Teens do not have a place in the library to call their own, beyond a few shelves that house teen books and audiobooks.
- There is only one study room. There are tables and study carrels where people can work, but they are in the same large room as the rest of the library and noise is an issue.
- The shelves are overcrowded and we are forced to remove items from circulation that are relatively new and still circulate, simply because we need room for newer items.
- The community needs more areas to gather and socialize and many like to use the library for that purpose, but we have little space for them to do so

The library is seeking to expand the building, but avoid increasing property taxes by:

- Minimizing Costs: The current building will be changed as little as possible and the new portion will be designed with cost efficiency in mind.
- Applying for Grants: The library will apply for a construction grant from the Illinois State Library. If funds are available, we would qualify for a grant covering 49% of construction costs.
- Seeking Donations: The library will seek donations from private individuals and entities, especially to cover the costs of special projects, such as an outdoor programming venue.
- Using Reserves: The library board saved the proceeds from the sale of the prior library building and has worked to build on those reserves over the past decade. Some of the reserves will be held for building maintenance, but a significant portion will be used on the expansion project.

