The Ossining Public Library 2021-2024

LONG RANGE STRATEGIC PLAN

FOCUS ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION
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FOR MORE THAN 150 YEARS, THE OSSINING PUBLIC LIBRARY HAS ESTABLISHED A LEGACY OF SERVICE, ENRICHMENT, AND INSPIRATION TO THE GREATER OSSINING COMMUNITY.

Chartered as the Sing Sing Public Library in 1893, the Library began as a collection of 700 books in the superintendent’s office at Park School. It found its permanent home on Croton Avenue in 1914, thanks to a $26,000 gift from Andrew Carnegie as part of his library building program. Completed in 2007, the library’s current 44,000 square foot building offers space for the library’s expansive collections, meeting, program and study spaces, a 250-seat theater, computers and Wi-Fi for public use, and magnificent views of the Hudson River. The library is dedicated to serving the literary, educational, and cultural needs of greater Ossining.

A school district public library, the Library serves the residents of the Ossining Union Free School District. Located 30 miles north of Manhattan, Ossining is a vibrant community of 37,634 residents with a racially, ethnically, culturally, and socioeconomically diverse population. The town is home to a large immigrant population, with 31% of Ossining residents born outside of the United States: 30% of households speak Spanish at home, driving home the need for a long range vision that embraces, celebrates, and centers diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The Library’s strategic planning process began amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, a time when library services were dramatically transformed to reach people virtually. The shift to a new dimension of programming and services helped to inspire this plan’s commitment to move the library forward and propel its evolution to your library of the future.
Diversity, equity, and inclusion formed the foundation of the Library’s strategic planning vision. As a cultural institution in a culturally diverse community, the Library found it essential to build a plan that was grounded in recognizing, addressing, and celebrating all members of the Ossining community.

The Library defined Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as follows:

- **Diversity** – Celebrating, understanding, and representing the differences of all cultures.
- **Equity** – Meeting people where they are, offering what they need, and removing barriers to ensure equal access.
- **Inclusion** – Creating a sense of belonging and involvement for all community members.

The library was committed to building a plan with a DEI focus because:

- The library belongs to, and should feel like home to, all members of the Ossining community.
- Research shows diverse workforces drive greater productivity, innovation, and people engagement.
- We must be the change we long to see.
- We want more people of color and those from underrepresented groups in greater Ossining to use our collections, programs, services, and facilities.
- It’s the right thing to do.
STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

To formulate the Long Range Strategic Plan, a Strategic Planning Subcommittee consisting of members of the Library’s Board of Trustees, Library management, community members, and staff was formed in the winter of 2021. The committee engaged the services of Michael T. Holmes, founder and principal consultant of INSIGHT4U Consulting, LLC., to guide the planning process.

Over several months, the committee studied best practices in diversity, equity, and inclusion; identified library trends; considered priorities for library services, collections and programs; analyzed the organization’s strengths and weaknesses; and identified goals and objectives for the future of the library.

Strategic Planning Subcommittee

Amanda Curley, Board of Trustees
Althema Goodson, Board of Trustees Vice President
Karen LaRocca-Fels, Library Director
Marcela Levin, Community Member
Ignayra Lopez, Head of Children's Services
Cecilia Quintero, Board of Trustees
Molly W. Robbins, Assistant Library Director
Guillermo Rodriguez, Adult Services Library Assistant
Francine Vernon, Community Member
Matthew Weiss, Board of Trustees President
Suzy Zavarella, Head of Teen Services
# Ossining Public Library's Vision for the Path Forward: 2021-2024

## SWOT ANALYSIS

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<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborative, dedicated, and responsible collection of staff, board members, Foundation members, Friends, and volunteers</td>
<td>Inconsistent evidence of the marketing plan's effectiveness in reaching more of Ossining's diverse communities</td>
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<td>Cohesiveness of leadership staff</td>
<td>Diversity of Ossining is underrepresented</td>
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<td>Centrally located/easily accessible via personal or public transportation</td>
<td>Inadequate funding to convert part-time staff to full-time</td>
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<td>History of financial stability via tax-based revenue, renewable grants, donations, and consistent expense/budgetary management</td>
<td>Civil Service requirements slow/complicate the hiring/promotion process</td>
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<td>History of long-lasting relationships with well-established organizations in Ossining and surrounding areas</td>
<td>Hours of service are misaligned with needs of current and potential patrons</td>
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<td>Openness to innovative thinking and organizational change</td>
<td>OPL is not perceived by some as a leadership partner</td>
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<td>Lack of contingency plan (OPL reacted to pandemic vs. having proactive plan)</td>
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## OPPORTUNITIES

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<td>To build deeper partnerships throughout Ossining and neighboring areas with those who are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion</td>
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<td>Accelerating completion of physical and virtual infrastructure changes</td>
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<td>Expansion and diversification of programs, services, and collections to include socio-economic and health needs of Ossining residents</td>
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<td>Hiring, promoting, and developing more diverse and culturally competent staff, board members, and volunteers</td>
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<td>Upgrading technology to meet the needs of patrons today and tomorrow</td>
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## THREATS

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<td>Tax-based funding exposes OPL to budget uncertainties and potential cuts</td>
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<td>Difficulty in affording expanding collections, programs, and services</td>
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<td>Staff overwhelmed without sufficient funding to convert part-timers to full-time</td>
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<td>Unforeseen external occurrences, such as pandemic</td>
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<td>Competition from other area libraries and nonprofits for funding and people support</td>
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STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The subcommittee identified six pillars which provide a framework for the strategic plan:

- Shared Financial Accountability
- Diversification of Collections, Programs, and Services
- Diversification and Development of Staff, Board, and Volunteers
- Create/Sustain Relationships with All Communities in the Greater Ossining Area
- Physical and Virtual Infrastructure Transformation
- Brand and Image

The resulting plan is a living document that provides a roadmap for the library’s future, with the aim of continuing the transformation of the Ossining Public Library into the center for community engagement and education, where all are welcomed and their needs are met at the shining beacon on the hill.
MISSION AND VISION

OUR MISSION
The Ossining Public Library enriches, connects, and inspires our community.

OUR VISION
The Ossining Public Library will be the community's center for lifelong learning.
Our strategic plan will continue the transformation of the Ossining Public Library into the center for community engagement and education where **ALL ARE WELCOMED** and **THEIR NEEDS ARE MET** at the shining beacon on the hill.
THE OSSINING PUBLIC LIBRARY'S STRATEGIC PLAN VISION

Six Pillars and Overarching Goals

Milestones

Goals & Objectives

Tactics & Actions

Impact/Results

- Shared Financial Accountability
- Diversification of Collections, programs, and Services
- Diversification and Development of Staff, Board, and Volunteers
- Create/Sustain Relationships with All Parts of Greater Ossining
- Physical and Virtual Infrastructure Transformation
- Brand and Image

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Foundation of the Long-Range Strategic Plan
OPL's Roadmap for the Path Forward: 2021-2024

Foundational Pillar--Shared Financial Accountability

The Library has historically received great support from the taxpayers, with more than a decade of successful budget votes. However, with the potential for volatile shifts in New York and nationwide economics, the Library is exposed to budget uncertainties and potential cuts. This plan will allow the library to achieve and sustain a more robust and less tax-dependent revenue flow.

GOALS/OBJECTIVES/TACTICS/ACTIONS

**Goal:** Maximize funds from the Friends of the Library (FOL) and Ossining Library Foundation (OLF).

**Objective:** Reach agreement with funders on 1-2 opportunities they each will support.

**Tactics/Actions:**
- Library leadership and staff will compile projects suitable for funding and will support the FOL and OLF in their fundraising activities.
OPL's Roadmap for the Path Forward: 2021-2024

Foundational Pillar—Shared Financial Accountability

**Goal:** Maintain acquisition of grants received as of FY2021.

**Objective:** Sustain flow of funding from previously acquired grants.

**Tactics/Actions:**
- Identify and share with key stakeholders a list of renewable grants.
- Review grant submission timelines and include reminders on the calendars of information/data contributors.
- Advocate with legislators for support their support of the library for grant awards.

**Goal:** Obtain one new grant each year of the strategic plan.

**Objective:** Increase revenue from renewable, local, regional, state, and federal grants.

**Tactics/Actions:**
- Identify 10-20 new grant opportunities for which OPL is eligible.
- Apply for grants that support the library’s mission and that are suitable for fundable projects.
Foundational Pillar--Diversification of Collections, Programs, and Services

The Library's collections, programs, and services should all reflect the diversity of the greater Ossining community. With this plan, the Library will build on its progress to ensure that it is inclusive, embracing of differences, and reflects the underrepresented communities of greater Ossining.

GOALS/OBJECTIVES/TACTICS/ACTIONS

Goal #1- Programs: Increase the diversity of library programs, both in respect to the content/presenter of the program and the target audience of the program. Ensure that programs are designed to recognize/celebrate the underrepresented communities of Ossining, including those who are culturally diverse, LGBTQ+, and differently-abled.

Objective #1: Engage and serve more people from diverse communities.

Tactics/Actions

- Assess "current state" of library programs to determine necessary goals.
- Re-examine current programs to assess opportunities for diversity enhancements.
- Identify new programs that would engage diverse groups.
- Conduct focus groups with diverse populations.
OPL's Roadmap for the Path Forward: 2021-2024

Foundational Pillar--Diversification of Collections, Programs, and Services

Goal #2- Collections: Improve the collections and assess for diversity and relevance.

Objective #2: Continue building on collection improvement from prior plan.

Tactics/Actions
- Assess the current status of library collection for inclusion of diverse representation, popularity, relevance, and timeliness.
- Leverage knowledgeable resources for recommendations.
- Expand the library's Spanish-language collection.

Goal #3- Services: Expand OPL services for indigent and underrepresented people.

Objective #3: Underrepresented/indigent residents view OPL as the "go to source" for reliable technology and information.

Tactics/Actions
- Assess technology and other services to determine gaps.
- Investigate and implement technologies such as Wi-Fi hotspots and outdoor access points.
- Investigate and implement technologies and patron training opportunities to ensure competency opportunities for patrons.
- Investigate translation services for phones and tablets to allow for point-of-service translations.
- Assess and improve ability to provide services aimed at job readiness and social services.
The Library is committed to ensuring that its staff, Board, and volunteers are representatively diverse and equipped to engage and serve all Ossining peoples and communities.

**GOALS/OBJECTIVES/TACTICS/ACTIONS**

**Goals**

- As opportunities become available (especially management-level staff roles, board positions, and volunteer roles), actively attract, interview, and fill openings with diverse candidates who meet/exceed the qualifications.
- Design and implement continuous improvement training to support staff development and career pathing, with a focus on DEI.
- Every 2-3 years conduct "voice of the customer" surveys to assess people engagement, development, and perception of positive change.
OPL's Roadmap for the Path Forward: 2021-2024

Foundational Pillar--Diversification and Development of Staff, Board, and Volunteers.

Objectives for goals

- OPL staff, board, and volunteers consistently model the behaviors of a service organization committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- The demographics of OPL staff, board, and volunteers are more reflective of the diversity of the greater Ossining community.

Tactics/Actions for Goals and Objectives

- Meet with staff, board members, and volunteers to obtain input on training needs.
- Gather resources to provide professional, high-quality training.
- Obtain funding for training to ensure execution is budget-neutral.
- Launch individual development plans for staff, board, and volunteers.
- Identify staff candidates for cross-training and provide them with the training needed to support their work across departments.
- Provide all staff with technology training.
- Evaluate staffing levels and determine viability of filling open positions with a full-time or part-time+ position.
Foundational Pillar—Create and Sustain Relationships with All Parts of Greater Ossining

Expanded relationships with diverse communities and neighboring organizations will help the Library improve its engagement among underrepresented populations, connect with new patrons, and launch new initiatives.

GOALS/OBJECTIVES/TACTICS/ACTIONS

Goals

- Engage and embrace five or more organizations each year of the plan.
- Leverage technology to identify community organizations unknown to OPL.
- Determine various approaches for community outreach and engagement, including to non-library users.
Objectives for Goals

- Build deep and lasting relationships throughout Ossining and beyond.
- Establish relationships with organizations that are willing to support our DEI focus.

Tactics/Actions for Goals and Objectives

- Library leaders review and prioritize list of community organizations for outreach.
- Initiate efforts to conduct community focus groups with organizations.
- Design outreach communications.
- Identify OPL staff who have strong connections to targeted community organizations and empower staff to pursue those relationships.
Changes to the Library's physical and virtual infrastructures are needed in order for the library to be relevant. Finding a balance between physical and virtual offerings, enhancing the building's interior and exterior, and addressing issues with the library facility will allow the library to continue its evolution towards becoming your library of the future.

**GOALS/OBJECTIVES/TACTICS/ACTIONS**

**Goals**

- Obtain and deploy high speed broadband internet and appropriate reliable and robust technology throughout the library.

- Acquire flexible, appropriate hardware setups and workspaces.

- Create protocols and processes to enable remote work capabilities when suitable.
Foundational Pillar—Physical and Virtual Infrastructure Transformation

- Implement recurring training to enhance the skills and competencies of staff and board members to excel in a digital workplace.

- Complete Phase 2 of supplemental HVAC project.

- Revisit, evaluate, and execute plan for space reconfiguration.

Objective for all Goals

Expedite changes needed to improve the library's physical and virtual infrastructure and digital community services.

Tactics/Actions for all Goals and Objectives

Apply for E-Rate funding for broadband and network infrastructure.

Execute training and technology initiatives.

Continue work on HVAC and space planning initiatives.

Evaluate service desk locations and staffing of service points for efficiency and ease of use for patrons.

Evaluate staff workstations, software, and equipment to enhance productivity.
The Library must ensure that greater Ossining knows what the Library offers and represents. Through improvements to its marketing and communications, the Library will be reestablished as the community place where all are welcome and served.

**GOALS/OBJECTIVES/TACTICS/ACTIONS**

**Goals**

- Renew brand images on the library’s website and social media sites.

- Update all marketing materials and recurring communications, making sure that all relevant communications are available in several languages, including English and Spanish.

- Refresh interior decor to be more welcoming, inspirational, and comfortable.

- Implement quarterly videos of "A Day Inside Your Library" or other opportunities to showcase the library.
Objective for all Goals

Rebrand the library as the peoples' library of the future, and establish the library as a model of a true DEI leader.

Tactics/Actions for all Goals and Objectives

Create and implement a marketing plan.

Assess most recent census data to determine in which languages library materials should be published.

Arrange for library leaders and the Board of Trustees to have a higher profile in the community.

Upgrade and distribute library promotional material.

Evaluate effectiveness of direct mailing opportunities to the community, informing them of programs and services.

Assess all signage for ease and efficiency of wayfinding.
THE OSSINING PUBLIC LIBRARY

Board of Trustees
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Cecilia Quintero, Secretary
Amanda Curley
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Shandi Speller

Library Director
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Ossining Library Foundation Board
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Pamela Thornton, Treasurer
Miriam Risko
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