

Media-Upper Providence Free Library
Strategic Plan 2023-2027
5.2023

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Section I: Background

Introduction

The vision of the Media-Upper Providence Free Library is to strengthen relationships and lives within our community by creating a welcoming and resource rich space to encourage life-long learning, expanded literacy and meaningful connections to create a common benefit and bond with our patrons, businesses and non-profit organizations.

The mission of the Media-Upper Providence Free Library is to provide informational, educational, recreational and cultural resources to inspire and meet the needs of Media and Upper Providence residents and the greater community.

The Media-Upper Providence Free Library (MUPFL) was established and founded by the Women's Club of Media in 1901. It serves over 16,000 residents in Media Borough and Upper Providence Township. As of December 2022, the Library **has nearly 10,000** active card holders. Over **100,000** patrons visit the library each year. Our Library is an integral part of the 26 libraries that form the Delaware County Library System. Delco libraries seek to be open, accessible, and welcoming spaces that enable people to transform their lives through life-long learning, digital literacy, and connections to others. Our vision is to be a vital and beloved community resource for all, meeting challenges and leading change with unfettered access to equitable, diverse, and inclusive opportunities that promote discovery, innovation, and learning. Delco libraries seek to center our services and programs around community needs, and ensure that everyone is aware of how to access resources that are beneficial and support their enrichment. We will collaborate with our diverse community to ensure that our services, staff, programs, and collection are inclusive. Further, we will be flexible and adaptable, meeting our community where they are with resources, support, and information that responds to their needs.

A vital community hub at the heart of a highly walkable small town, our Library continues to expand program offerings and library content to meet the needs of patrons and local businesses. Greater usage of the library is apparent as the rising share of Media-Upper Providence cardholders is compared to the percentage of the population. In Media cardholders rose from 36.7% in 2010 to 57.7% in 2021, while in Upper Providence cardholders rose from 26.1% to 36.7% (see Chart 1 in Appendix C).

We know from respondents to the 2022 Patron Survey that residents of Media and Upper Providence visit other Delco libraries to take advantage of the various program offerings and special events the 26 libraries have to offer. For example, the Delco library website highlights the various children's programs for residents to choose from based on their available time and accessibility, children's ages and interests, etc.. Our Children's Program Director coordinates and shares events with other program directors to offer children and parents multiple opportunities to learn and grow.

It is important that we pay particular attention to the needs of Media and Upper Providence residents for whom our Library is their sole option due to their limited access to transportation. The new library building, completed in 2016, reflects this concern. It provides for handicapped accessibility with the installation of ADA-compliant entrances, bathrooms, an elevator and designated parking. Further, the overall 10,000 square foot floor plan is flexible by design to respond to the evolving needs of library patrons and the local community.

The Library is also now fine free, removing an economic barrier that impedes access to library materials and services for financially disadvantaged people within our communities, particularly minors. To further improve access, we have internet hotspots available for patron check-out and a solar panel charging station near the library entrance. Porch chairs have been brought out so patrons can congregate and read outside, while easy chairs inside the library offer a cozy living room environment.

Media-UPstairs is a new initiative to develop the second floor of the library as a community hub, a meeting area for residents, businesses, and nonprofits to network and partner in activities benefitting our community. When not rented, the smaller full-windowed Jackson Street room is now an open quiet reading room with lounge chairs, the medium size board room is set up with table and chairs, and the large conference room is also open with moderate noise allowance for cell phone use, virtual meetings, tutoring, small group discussion and game playing. We also plan to add a coffee and tea area.

Description of Media and Upper Providence Community

Over time the demographic and income profile of Media and Upper Providence residents have changed markedly. This is especially true of Media, where median household income jumped 82%, from \$42,703 in 2000 to \$77,750 in 2020. Upper Providence saw a more modest increase of just 6% over the same period, from \$107,166 to \$113,633. See Table 1 [Media UP Census Table](#).

Both Media and Upper Providence lie within the Rose Tree Media School District. Depending on where they live, public school students attend either Media Elementary School or Rose Tree Elementary School. They then go on to Springton Lake Middle School and after that to Penncrest High School.

Media and Upper Providence residents are fortunate to have access to a broad range of local cultural and community resources. The Media Arts Council's new building on State Street serves not only as a fine arts gallery for local artists to show their work, but is also a venue for live music performances, play readings, community poetry readings, and a variety of community arts events. The Media Theater on State Street, a musical theater organization offering classes in acting, singing and dance, produces five musicals a year. The Hedgerow Theater in Moylan, a resident repertory theater, produces high quality classical and contemporary plays. The Media Fellowship House focuses on creating programs, organizing coalitions, and facilitating conversations that promote diversity and understanding.

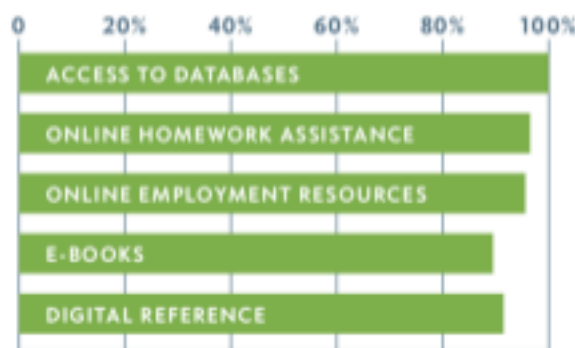
An important role for the Library is to support local nonprofits such as the Media Arts Council, Media Fair Trade Committee, Keep Media Green, Media Tree Tenders and Transition Town Media by making available its physical facilities including Media UPstairs. For example, the Library regularly hosts MAC at the Library rotating art exhibits and co-sponsored with the Media Fair Trade Committee a pre-Valentine Fair Trade Chocolate Tasting. Last Spring, the Library co-sponsored with Keep Media Green a lecture by the entomologist Doug Tallamy that drew a packed audience. The library also has teamed up with Transition Town Media Bee City to host a lecture series held in Media UPstairs that recently included an event with the Park Naturalist to teach kids and adults on identifying creatures who "left their mark". Library board members and staff are also in continuous contact with leaders of Media's nonprofit community to learn how the Library could work with local nonprofits to respond effectively to the evolving needs of Media borough and Upper Providence township residents.

As regards identifying and meeting the evolving needs of the community, the Aspen Institute published the highly influential report *Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries* (Appendix E) which concluded that "the public library can be especially effective in the areas of informal and

nontraditional learning, jobs and workforce development, addressing new literacies, fostering civic participation and closing broadband and participation divides.” The research found that “Public libraries provide a lifetime of learning opportunities for people in the communities they serve. They are especially effective at supporting informal learning, connecting diverse learning experiences, filling gaps between learning opportunities and offering new learning models that may not be feasible in schools, which face tighter boundaries and controls.” It provided the following chart to describe the impact of libraries on community:

IMPACT OF LIBRARIES ON COMMUNITY³²

Nationally, public libraries provide these community access services:



Public libraries are also increasingly providing these platform services that enable users to generate their own content and collaborate:



Major accomplishments since the 2017 Strategic Plan:

- MUPFL Board President led a successful effort to put the library on more secure financial footing. The much higher than expected cost of the rebuilding project threatened the library’s financial sustainability. This was finally resolved when Media Borough Council agreed to refinance the mortgage from a 10-year to a 30-year loan; it lowered annual mortgage payments by 68%.
- In 2020 & 2021, new Trustees were recruited and the Bylaws were updated to reflect current working committees.
- The HVAC system was upgraded to address staff concerns during the coronavirus outbreak.
- A community bulletin board was installed on the porch to publicize both library and local community events.
- Media Borough allocated funds for the library to establish a rainwater collection garden to both beautify our memorial patio and conduct programs on green eco-sustainable solutions.

The 2023 – 2027 Strategic Planning Process

In May 2022, the Governance Committee established a sub-committee - Strategic Plan Working Committee (SPWC) that comprised a select group of Board Members and the Library Director. The sub-committee was tasked to design and conduct a patron survey to better understand what current patrons and the community wanted from their library.

The survey was distributed in June 2022 via social media, municipal and local non-profit newsletters. Hard copies were made available at the library check-out desk. Both Media Borough and Upper Providence Township Councils completed the survey as well as included a link to it in their monthly newsletters. It was communicated at several community events for event goers to click the QR code to access. The survey concluded November 1, 2022 (see Appendix A for survey and Appendix B for results).

In 2021, Delaware County Library Association updated their strategic plan. This updated plan as well as strategic plans from similar sized libraries provided guidance during the survey design phase as well as in the preparation of the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. In January 2023 the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan was drafted for the SPWC to finalize and prepare to present to the Board for approval.

Summary of 2022 Patron Survey Results

The survey of library users was conducted from July to November 2022: 273 people completed the survey, which asked for an evaluation of the library's collection, programs and services, and suggestions for improvements. Nearly half of respondents visited the library a few times a month, 31% visited a few times a year, and nearly 13% visited a few times a week. Around 92% came to borrow books, about 39% to borrow CDs, DVDs and museum passes, 36% to socialize and hang out, 34% to attend children's programs, 33% to attend adult programs, 27% to read newspapers and magazines, nearly 27% to use computers or WiFi, and 13% to borrow WiFi Hotspots.

Nearly 86% of respondents found staff to be courteous, professional and helpful. They thought the following areas needed improvement:

1. Upgrade the collection. Expand the adult book section and add more books on the environment, nature and science.
2. Provide more comfortable chairs, more inviting areas for people to sit, read, browse books, and hang out.
3. More programs and activities for older kids (grade 5 and up); fun activities such as board game night, dungeon and dragons night, escape room, boom series fan clubs because "kids need a break from technology"; programs for young teens such as writing workshops, book competitions, summer reading competitions.
4. Program suggestions for Media-UPstairs: 81% of respondents favor holding workshops/clubs and lectures. Suggested topics/areas: Media/local history, new technologies, gardening, holiday crafts, and other hobbies (for example: photography, chess); painting classes, crochet and cooking demonstrations; poetry readings; talks by local authors; bicycle maintenance workshops. 56% favor Fix-it workshops to show people how to repair things; 55% favor a "Human" Library for patrons to share languages, culture, cooking, and so on; 49% favor a Library of "Things" to lend tools, equipment, games, etc.

Section II: Goals and Objectives

Media-Upper Providence Free Library's (MUPFL) 4-year strategic plan has four key goals:

1. Build an engaged and invested library community
2. Ensure board and library staff are knowledgeable, committed and supported in their efforts to help the library achieve its mission
3. Build a financial sustainability plan
4. Create a warm and inviting environment connecting with our community, and increasing library use through patron engagement

For each goal and associated objectives, action items are identified. Responsibility for each task and accompanying timeline are identified in Section III.

The Board of Trustees and staff thought it necessary to update the strategic plan for several reasons:

- The most recent Strategic Plan was published in 2017
- The outbreak of Covid-19 made it necessary to:
 - a. Offer more virtual and on-line services and programs and increase digital offerings.
 - b. Reorganize the library's physical space needed to accommodate in-person events and patronage in keeping with CDC guidelines.
- The feedback received from the 2022 Patron Survey offered the opportunity to design the 2023 Strategic Plan to more inclusive of patron and community based needs

With the lifting of these health and safety restrictions, the Board saw an opportunity to reassess and improve library programs, redesign library space – both inside and outside, and actively build more community partnerships. To shape this new plan, the Board determined soliciting input from patrons and the community would be an essential first step. Hence a patron survey was designed and conducted.

Parallel to the design and implementation of a patron survey and the start of the strategic planning process, the library began to 'open up'. Input from the survey highlighted the value of creating an environment that is **warm and inviting to connect the community**, satisfy patrons and increase library use. Hence several changes are underway. Specifically, the 2nd floor was designated a Community Hub. Speakers, training sessions and clubs began to request use of this space, so rental guidelines were established. A 'community living room' to welcome patrons into the library's home began by placing comfortable seating in the main entrance, 2nd floor lobby and out on the porch.

Here are some of the action items:

Build an engaged and invested library community

Partnerships were quickly formed with other local non-profits, council members and business leaders. They are essential to build a lasting bond with community leaders to more effectively serve Media and Upper Providence residents.

Connect the Library to the Community We Serve

Develop and implement a targeted community outreach and marketing strategy to increase community awareness of the range of services and programs the library provides.

Deepen our cooperation and collaboration with nonprofit organizations in Media and Upper Providence; engage with community partners and businesses to develop shared opportunities to reach out, and build a strong vibrant civic network.

Support Media Borough events and initiatives: participate in community events, support Borough initiatives through Library programs, services, and resources.

Be a Learning Resource for our Community

- Offer arts and cultural enrichment and personal growth programs and opportunities to encourage lifelong learning
- Collaborate with community non-profits to bring a variety of speakers, films and performances
- Promote and provide life skills (financial, computer, parenting etc.) resources through collections, services, and events

Build a Financial Sustainability Plan

The Board also recognizes in order to build a financial sustainability plan there is an immediate need to supplement bi-annual appeals and book sales. Planning is underway for an annual summer community fundraising event to kick-off the Summer Reading program with a Family Fun Day for all ages.

Ensure the Board and Library Staff are Knowledgeable, Committed and Supported

To ensure the board and library staff are knowledgeable, committed and supported in their efforts to help the library achieve its mission, for nearly two years the ongoing assessment of board members individual strengths has resulted in a shifting of responsibilities and assigning members more specifically focused leadership roles. This organic evolution demonstrates the versatility of our current membership although recruitment for additional members is ongoing with emphasis on fundraising and financial sustainability skills.

Understanding that libraries with strong trustee groups are strong libraries, the Governance Committee is charged with ensuring that Board members are properly equipped to help the library achieve its mission. The best boards strive to create a strong future for their communities. They imagine the kind of community in which all of us would like to live, work, play, raise a family, and they ask: “How can a library play a catalytic role in helping to create that ideal community?”

To know their responsibilities and duties as trustees, and as part of the new Trustee Welcome Kit, Board members are asked to view *Getting On Board: Board Basics* (Appendix F) and read two documents provided by the PA Library Staff Academy: *Leadership by Design* (Appendix G) and *Board Assessment 2021* (Appendix H). The Governance Committee also will earmark ongoing training to further develop specific skills and program knowledge.

With the implementation of this strategic plan the groundwork will be laid to ensure appropriate funds can be raised, and resources – both human and material – will be maximized to ensure a strong and continued future for the Media-Upper Providence Free library.

Section III: Strategic Plan – Actions, Timeline and Responsible Lead/Committee Ongoing Spreadsheet on page 8.

Section IV: Conclusion

The Board and Staff enthusiastically embrace this next phase of the library’s growth and development. With refinancing the library’s debt, creating a more welcoming environment, engaging fully with partnerships in the community, and establishing an annual fundraising event to supplement our longstanding fundraising avenues, we are confident these efforts will help sustain and cement the library as a welcoming community hub.

Officers

Nancy Mott, President
Suzanne Cruit, Vice President
Pat Scanlon, Treasurer
Charlene Chapman, Secretary

Trustees

Meh Alam
Bernadette Daniel
Pamela Lashbrook, CMP
Stephanie Sher
Elsa Rapp Woodfin

Trustees, Strategic Planning Working Committee

Tu Packard, Strategic Plan Lead
Cynthia Sikaras
Nancy Mott
Suzanne Cruit

Library Director

Sandra Samuel

Library Staff Members

Sarrah Deets
Vicki Sheeler
Margie Sherwood

Appendix A: 2022 Patron Survey

Appendix B: [2022 Patron Survey Results](#)

Appendix C: [Library Cardholders Rising Share](#)

Appendix D: [Staff Interviews.2.2023](#)

Appendix E: [Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries](#)

Appendix F: [Getting On Board](#)

Appendix G: [Leadership By Design](#)

Appendix H: [Board Assessment 2021](#)



			Timeline	Responsible Lead/Committee
Goal	#1	Build an engaged and invested library community.		
Objective	1.a.	Implement the 2023 - 2027 Strategic Plan	Begin June 2023	Board of Trustees/Library Director
Actions	1.a.i.	Approve the 2023 - 2027 Strategic Plan and Goals	May Board Meeting	Board of Trustees
	1.a.ii	Share 2022 Patron Survey Results and Strategic Plan with the community	June 2023	Governance Committee/Library Director
	1.a.iii	Explore feasibility of implementing specific program suggestions from patron survey such as the Library of Things, Fixit/Repair Cafe, and Workshops/Clubs	Begin June 2023	TBD
	1.a.iv	Respond to patron survey feedback with improvements and additions to library programs, resources and physical plant.	Begin June 2023	Governance Committee
	1.a.v	Hold focus group conversations to continually identify the most pressing needs of library patrons	As needed, but at least annually	Governance Committee
Objective	1.b.	Heighten awareness in the community of the library's value.	Ongoing	Marketing and Public Relations Committee/ Board of Trustees/Library Director
Actions	1.b.i	Participate in Upper Providence and Media community events including, but not limited to, Dining Under The Stars, Community Day, Halloween Parade, and Media 5-Mile Race .	Ongoing	Board of Trustees
	1.b.ii	Build a strong, effective social media campaign	Ongoing	Marketing and Public Relations Committee/Library Director
	1.b.iii	Create Multi-Media Outreach Program to promote library programs, services, materials.	June - December 2023	Library Director/Marketing Public Relations Committee

			Timeline	Responsible Lead/Committee
Goal	#2	Ensure the Board and Library staff are knowledgeable, committed and supported in their efforts to help the Library achieve its mission.	Annually	Board Officers/Governance Committee
Objective	2.a	Assess and understand board and staff development needs.	Annually	Governance Committee/Library Director
Actions	2.a.i	Establish staff training plans after review	Annually	Library Director
	2.a.ii.	Create Board Training Materials; Provide Access to Board Development Seminars and Workshops; Create Board Assessment Materials to be Administered Annually	Begin June 2023	Governance Committee
Objective	2.b.	Recruit new Board Members to build a bench to meet term limits and talent gaps	Begin June 2023	Governance Committee and Board of Trustees
	2.b.i.	Recruit Non-Board Members to supplement and support Committee activities. e.g. Annual Fundraising Event Committee and to expand Library volunteer pool for community events.	Begin June 2023	Governance Committee and Board of Trustees
Objective	2.c	Adhere to and abide by Trustee Service Agreement and Bylaws. Revise as needed.	Annual	Board of Trustees/Governance Committee
Objective	2.d.	Establish an Emeritus Board	June 2023	Governance Committee

			Timeline	Responsible Lead/Committee
Goal	#3	Build a financial sustainability plan		
Objective	3.a.	Identify library needs - financial and physical - and communicate those needs to stakeholders.	Annually	Board of Trustees/Library Director
Actions	3.a.i	Meet with MB, UPT liaisons to communicate financial sustainability.	Annually	Board Officers
	3.a.ii	Develop an outreach plan to communicate library financial needs and its impact on non-profit status.	Begin June 2023	Development Committee/Officers/Library Director
	3.a.iii	Review and assess current outreach expenses to determine cost effective outreach options.	3.2023-12.2023	Development Committee/Officers/Library Director
	3.a.iv	Design 4 separate outreach options to send/engage donors and community leaders. Expand use of emails for donations.	Quarterly	Development Committee/Library Director
	3.a.v	Create a list of donor naming	Ongoing	Development
	<u>3.a.vi.</u>	Identify programs to fundraise for such as the Library of Things, Repair Cafe, etc.	September 2023	Development and Fundraiser Committees/Board/Library Director
Objective	3.b.	Engage with Book Sale organizers	Ongoing	Designated Board Member
Objective	3.c.	Identify, plan and conduct an annual fundraiser	Annually	Fundraiser Committee/Library Director

			Timeline	Responsible Lead/Committee
Goal	#4	Create an environment that is warm and inviting to encourage community connections , satisfy patrons and increase Library use.	Ongoing	Library Director
Objective	4.a.	Determine physical plant improvements, i.e.	Begin June 2023	Library Director/Finance
Actions	4.a.i	Seek grant funds to redesign/refine physical	Begin June 2023	Library Director/Finance
	4.a.ii.	Identify a library interior design expert		Library Director/ Development Committee
Objective	4.b.	Establish the Library as a Community Hub.	Ongoing	Library Director/Marketing & PR Committee
Actions	4.b.i	Create a communication and solicitation	Ongoing	MPRC/Library Director
	4.b.ii.	Invite targeted non-profit organizations to	Ongoing	MPRC/Library Director
Objective	4.c.	Enhance Library Programming	Ongoing	Library Director and Staff
Actions	4.c.i.	Review staff and patron program feedback, compare family and adult programming of other local libraries, and implement new programming .	Ongoing	Library Director and Staff
	4.c.ii	Reach out to local elementary schools to identify mutually beneficial opportunities for collaboration.	Ongoing	Children's Program Director/MPRC