

Strategic Plan

Gothenburg Public Library

1104 Lake Avenue

Gothenburg, NE

2015 – 2018

Table of Contents

Planning Process.....	3
Mission Statement.....	4
Community Profile.....	4
Demographics.....	4
Education.....	4
Economics.....	5
Parks and Recreation.....	5
Community Involvement.....	6
S.W.O.T. Analysis.....	7
Internal Strengths.....	7
Internal Weaknesses.....	8
External Opportunities.....	8
External Threats.....	8
Community Needs.....	9
Community Need #1.....	9
Community Need #2.....	10
Community Need #3.....	11
Evaluation.....	11

Strategic Planning Process

Planning Team Members

Staff: Mary Koch (Library Director)

Library Board Members: Angie Richeson
Lynnette Stevens

Community Stakeholders: Mary Meisinger (Educator)
Gary Fritch (Retired Superintendent of Schools/Formal
City Councilman)
Angie Barkmeier (Director of Gothenburg Senior
Center)

The Gothenburg Public Library staff, board members, and patrons assisted in the development of this strategic plan. The Planning Team developed a questionnaire that focused on the community needs and daily life in Gothenburg.

The survey was placed online and hard copies were available at the library and various locations throughout the community. The Planning Team also developed a list of key stakeholders to ensure that all groups were represented. Committee members, with the exception of the director, conducted individual interviews with the key stakeholders. The list of key stakeholders included senior citizens, public school administrators, business owners, Chamber of Commerce director, clergy, a plant manager, a private school educator, a medical professional, the mayor, a low-income family and retired educators.

In addition to the individual interviews and paper copies of the survey available to individuals, the survey was distributed at the Noon Rotary Club meeting, the After Dark Rotary Club meeting, and at the noon meal at the Gothenburg Senior Center. A total of one hundred and sixty nine surveys were returned.

The Planning Team analyzed the survey responses to determine the strengths and needs of the Gothenburg community. The goals and objectives found in this strategic plan were developed from the data collected through the surveys and interviews.

Mission Statement

The Gothenburg Public Library believes it is essential to provide free and equal access to services and resources to meet the informational, recreational, educational and technological needs of the community. The library will serve as a center for learning and enrichment for all residents of all ages on an equal basis. The library's collections will offer access to a variety of points of view on various issues.

Community Profile

Demographics

Gothenburg is located in Dawson County in south central Nebraska. Interstate 80 is located on the south edge of town and is the main east-west highway that serves the community. Nebraska State Highway 47 travels through the center of town from North to South. Gothenburg is located 40 miles east of North Platte and 60 miles west of Kearney.

The population of Gothenburg is 3558. Children and teens 19 years of age and under constitute 29.2% of the total population. The largest population is found between the ages of 20 and 64 (51.3%) with citizens 65 and over comprising 19.3% of the population. Gothenburg has, in recent years, experienced an increase in the number of young families moving back to the community. This is reflected in the increase in the enrollment at the public school. According to the community profile worksheet, 99% of the population speaks only English. The other 1% speaks Spanish. There has been a slight increase in the Hispanic population over the past five years.

Education

The educational needs of the community are served by one public school and one private school. The enrollment in the public school is 494 elementary students, 153 junior high students, and 284 high school students. The private school has an enrollment of 15. A \$12.3 million bond issue was passed in 2001 which resulted in a new junior – senior high school building completed in 2004. The elementary school was also remodeled and additional classrooms were added. In 2011 the cafeteria, kitchen and concession areas were remodeled. The public school provides a junior-senior high library and an elementary library for

students and staff. The track and field complex, with partial funding from the Cindermates organization, was upgraded into a state of the art complex.

Building Blocks child care was built in 1992 as a result of the Baldwin Filter recruitment. It can serve up to 88 children, furnishes two meals a day, and is open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Economics

Economic activities center on agriculture and industry. The largest local employers are Baldwin Filters (200), Parker Hannifin Corp. (145), Gothenburg Public Schools (110), Gothenburg Memorial Hospital (140), and All Points Cooperative (40). Three Fortune 500 companies (Monsanto, Frito Lay, and Parker Hannifin Corp.) have operations in Gothenburg. Economic growth has added over five hundred jobs in the community. Gothenburg has a local sales tax with one-half percent designated for economic development and recruitment. This additional tax was passed in 1986 before there was a state law allowing all cities to set aside sales tax funds for economic development.

Electricity is provided with the city as the system operator and NPPD as the whole sale supplier. Gas is made available by several companies and residents are allowed to select their supplier each spring. Several options are available for phone, cable and internet. High speed fiber is in the process of being installed and this company will give residents an additional option for phone, cable, and internet.

The average household income is \$56,703 with 8.9% of the population living below the poverty line. Three hundred and four school age children were receiving free/reduced price lunches during the 2014-15 school year.

Taking into consideration the percentage of residents living at or below the poverty line and the number of youth utilizing the free/reduced lunch program, there is a large population with little or no disposal income. This makes the library's resources more valuable.

Parks and Recreation

The City of Gothenburg has seven parks. Facilities in the parks include four ball fields with electronic scoreboards, dugouts, lighting, concession stand, roofed

shelters, restrooms, one swimming pool, two tennis courts/basketball courts, and playground equipment.

Lake Helen is located in the northwest part of town and provides another park area for residents and visitors. Fishing and a hiking trail are part of this site. A shaded campground with horseshoe pits, restrooms and showers is located adjacent to Lake Helen. The Girl Scout and Boy Scout cabins are located at the campground.

Gothenburg Memorial Hospital added a Wellness Center in 1997. Access is available to the public for a monthly membership fee.

Wild Horse Golf Club opened in 1999. The 18 hole course located two miles from town attracts over 10,000 outside rounds played each year. The course has received many national honors including a number one rating by Golf Magazine in 2007.

The immediate area has an abundance of opportunities for those that enjoy fishing and hunting. Private and state lakes along with Jeffery Lake (12 miles) and Johnson Lake (25 miles) provide fishing and boating opportunities. Deer, turkey, duck and goose hunting along the Platte River allow the hunter a chance to enjoy the outdoors.

The city has three museums and one theatre. The Pony Express Station, Gothenburg Historical Museum and Sod House Museum attract over 25,000 visitors each year. Community volunteers operate the Sun Theatre/Community Playhouse where current movies are shown on Friday, Saturday, and Sundays.

Community Involvement

The Gothenburg Chamber of Commerce, Gothenburg Improvement Company, and the City of Gothenburg work together for business and industrial development in the community. Two Rotary Clubs, a Lions Club, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Teammates Mentoring Program and numerous local organizations provide opportunities for residents to become involved in community activities.

Gothenburg has fourteen churches of various denominations. The churches work together to support the community. In addition to their religious leadership, the ministerial association operates the local food pantry.

Resources for public communication include a weekly newspaper, *The Gothenburg Times*, a radio station (KRVN) located in Lexington, and newspapers located in North Platte and Cozad.

Library S.W.O.T. Analysis

Internal Strengths

- The library staff is very friendly and helpful. They go out of their way to find the information requested.
- The addition to the library was completed in 1999 and the exterior was designed to complement the original Carnegie library. The original part of the library was also extensively remodeled at this time. The library is ADA compliant and overall condition of the building and mechanical systems is excellent. The library is located on the main street immediately north of the downtown business district. It houses a community room which is available for public use outside of normal library hours. Almost all survey respondents have indicated the library's hours meet their needs.
- The library has a ten station public access computer lab. Two other public access computers are available in the children's library and there are two dedicated online card catalog stations. The city has been committed to replacing a certain number of computers each year so there are always some new computers available. The library also offers free Wi-Fi access.
- The library is funded by the City of Gothenburg. Additional revenue comes from state aid, the yearly Runza library fundraiser, "Great Books for Great Kids," memorials and donations. The Gothenburg Library Foundation has provided funding for some of the "extras" not covered by the budget such as programming and a microfilm reader.
- Every attempt is made to develop the collection in a way that reflects the needs and desires of its users and that is responsive to evolving technologies.
- The library has a copier, laminator, fax machine, die cut machine, binding machine and microfilm reader available for public in-house use.
- The library offers a Story Hour program for preschoolers during the school year, a children's Summer Reading program, and a Golden Sowers program. The library also offers delivery services for the homebound, or, if a family member prefers to pick them up, selection of materials for shut-ins. A

selection of large print and audio books are taken monthly to Stone Hearth Estates, a retirement/assisted living facility. The library also offers informative and entertainment programs for the public.

Internal Weaknesses

- Staff is all older offering experience and knowledge but lacking input and perspective of someone younger.
- Parking is very limited and when there is a large meeting or workshop being held in the community room or a funeral at the church across the street, there are no nearby parking spaces for patrons, many of whom are older. This severely limits regular library usage on those days. There is also a lack of proper storage space. There is no prominent signage indicating the location of the library and no street level sign denoting the actual library.
- Although total funding is above average for peer group, budget for collection development is below average.
- Difficult to find effective programming for the very busy young adult population.

External Opportunities

- All age groups have indicated a desire for more cultural/educational/entertainment opportunities outside of local sports and the movie theater.
- Older adults have growing need or desire for technology.
- The rural population surrounding Gothenburg still have very limited options for fast internet access.
- Community is close-knit and has a “can-do” attitude.

External Threats

- Farm economy is slowing and Gothenburg is very much an agriculture based community.
- Lack of quality affordable housing makes it difficult to recruit new business to Gothenburg and for young people to return to the community.
- Lack of adequate retail business forces many people to go out of town to shop for certain items.

- Constant change in technology.

Community Needs

The planning committee compiled results for all questions on the survey and from key informant interviews. The question asking how satisfied they were living in Gothenburg, Ne showed 66 2/3% were very satisfied while 30% were satisfied. Quality of life in Gothenburg was rated at 5 (the highest) by 53% of respondents and 4 by 37% with 10% giving it a rating of 3. Over the last five years, 56% felt the quality of life had improved and 42% thought it had stayed about the same.

Community needs were determined by analyzing the responses from the surveys and key informant interviews and then ranking them by frequency of response. The need for housing (better quality and affordable) and more retail business were the overwhelming top responses. The planning committee believed these needs are being addressed by the City, Chamber, and GIC, as well as, the county economic development entity, Dawson Area Development, and that the difference the library could make in addressing these two needs was very limited.

Community Need #1

There is a need for additional daycare and for early childhood education, both education of the child and of parent awareness of such issues as growth and early childhood development.

Goal #1: The library will provide information and resources for parents and the community regarding the needs/interests of children from birth to kindergarten.

Objective 1: Increase participation in Story Hour 10% by November 1, 2015 through more effective marketing and by offering an updated Story Hour program. Library staff will be responsible for program and marketing.

Objective 2: Inform the community of new books, videos and other resources for children on, at least, a quarterly basis. (Newsletter or handouts, Facebook, making the public more aware of the online catalog where new resources are shown as soon as they are added.) This will start immediately and be ongoing.

Objective 3: Form a parent advisory committee by January, 2016 to provide ideas/feedback regarding Early Childhood Programming. The advisory committee members shall be selected by the library director and children’s librarian from a list of parents they and other full-time staff have compiled. The committee shall be composed of three to five members.

Community Need #2

Having a community that is safe and that citizens can be proud of is important to Gothenburg residents both in terms of staying competitive with other communities and opportunities for growth, and in terms of personal well-being.

Goal #2: The library will contribute to the sense of pride and to the safety of the community.

Objective #1: Increase the signage designating the location of Gothenburg Public Library. Have the city street department install a street sign(s) indicating the library’s location by January, 2016. Currently, “Gothenburg Public Library” is engraved in stone above the doors on both the east and west entryways. Seek funding from the Library Foundation, possible grant(s), and/or through fundraising to have a free standing sign on the street side of the library installed by December, 2016. This effort will be coordinated by strategic planning team member, Gary Fritch, in cooperation with the Library Director and Library Board.

Objective #2: Designate the library as a “Neighborhood Watch/Safe House” location by January, 2016. This will be accomplished by members of the Library Board and local police department.

Objective #3: In cooperation with community partnerships, provide safety information and resources on digital citizenship, personal and community safety at least twice a year. Such classes might include self-defense classes taught by a police officer or wellness center staff; home safety classes presented by qualified business personnel; or emergency preparedness classes taught by the Dawson County emergency director, police or volunteer fire department members. The classes chosen may be in response to a current need or situation or to a perceived interest in certain topics. The library director shall arrange for such classes with input on topics to be chosen from library staff and board and/or public request. The classes will begin in February, 2016 and shall be ongoing.

Community Need #3

The lack of programming/things to do in Gothenburg showed up in a variety of ways on the surveys from “boring” to “nothing to do” to “lack of entertainment”, to “need entertainment/cultural opportunities for employees”, etc.

Goal #3: The library will increase cultural/entertainment programming for the community.

Objective #1: Provide a minimum of four programs a year. The library has already been working on increasing the number of programs offered for the past year but will put an increasing emphasis on it. The Nebraska Humanities Council will remain a resource, as well as, other local and regional programming opportunities that become available. Cost of individual programs and funding resources will be a determining factor in number of programs offered. Library staff will be primarily responsible for selection of the programs. The first program will be offered in October, 2015.

Objective #2: Establish cooperation with the Gothenburg Community Playhouse to provide a larger venue for programs when needed. This will be accomplished by December, 2015.

Objective #3: Communicate effectively with the public to increase attendance. The library will continue to seek out new and more effective ways to make the public aware of programs and activities. This will start immediately and be a continuously ongoing effort. Responsibility for effective communication and library advocacy will rest with each library staff member and each member of the library board of trustees.

Evaluation

The library staff will develop and implement the goals and objectives mentioned above and will also be primarily responsible for keeping any statistics and other information necessary for their evaluation. The strategic plan shall be reviewed annually in January by the library board. The board will determine if satisfactory progress is being made and whether the goals remain relevant and attainable or if they need to be adjusted or additional goals added.

Successful implementation of the goals will result in a library that is more connected and responsive to community needs and that will remain vital to the citizens of Gothenburg.