

Cleve J. Fredricksen Library—Strategic Plan 2023-2027

Acknowledgments

Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch Board of Trustees President James Grandon articulated the need for a renewed strategic plan even before his term as chair began. His guidance and support have been steadfast.

Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch's 2022 Strategic Planning Committee acknowledges with gratitude the ground-breaking work of the team of Board members that conducted the 2018-2021 strategic planning process. Their template serves as the base for this planning process for 2023-2027.

Representatives of each municipality within Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch's service area graciously allotted time to be interviewed for their respective perceptions of the library and its services. Those municipalities are Camp Hill Borough, East Pennsboro Township, Hampden Township, Lemoyne Borough, Lower Allen Township, and Wormleysburg Borough.

The BRAVO Group, a leading, Harrisburg-based public relations firm, generously facilitated the electronic collection of survey data from patrons primarily of the Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch Library service area. Bravo's willingness to share its expertise was critical to effectively and efficiently obtaining data reflected within this plan.

West Shore Chamber of Commerce President and CEO George W. Book, Jr. provided his insights regarding Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch and facilitated an effort to gather perspectives from his membership.

The State Data Center also provided demographic data for use in preparation of this report.

Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch's Board of Trustees and staff participated in separate focus groups that yielded singular perspectives from their active roles in making Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch a community success. So, too, did representatives of the Friends of the Fredricksen Library.

Finally, Fredricksen's Director and Assistant Director, Jessica Miller and Lori LaPorte Loss, provided their considerable expertise at every step of the planning process and were integral members of the committee.

The Committee thanks them all.

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Introduction

Fredricksen Board of Trustees President James Grandon in January, 2022, appointed a committee of five board members to review the just-concluded 2018-2021 strategic plan and to develop a new plan for three to five ensuing years. The committee began its work with guidance that a 2022 plan ought not “reinvent the wheel” for the 2017 plan had effectively set a template for future efforts.

Members of the committee appointed by the Chair were Stephanie Andrejack, Tom Darr, Larry Means, Andrew Ritter, and Abby Tierney. Participating Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch staff were Director Jessica Miller and Assistant Director Lori LaPorte Loss.

Committee members learned a great deal in gathering data and insights that inform the observations which follow regarding Mission, Vision, Core Values, and Goals. In brief:

Library patrons overwhelmingly love Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch and they want “more” of just about everything the library offers them.

From a safe place for children, to a reliable source for information, to creative kid’s programs, and even just for borrowing books (still the public’s #1 enthusiasm), whether it be working adults, seniors, job seekers, those with disabilities, or so many others – Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch’s patrons like what exists but want to see expanded opportunities for all.

While this plan is intended to guide the board and staff over the next several years, its guidance will prove hollow without expanded financial support. Maintaining “what is” and meeting the public’s desires for “what can be” requires revenue expansion from multiple sources now and over the next five years.

How we began

The committee began its task by identifying types of data and insights needed for review and analysis and the means to collect that information in as many diverse ways as was thought feasible. That information would ultimately identify values and goals to guide and improve Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch’s service to the community.

The committee sought data directly from resources such as the Pennsylvania Data Center. Focus groups and personal interviews were conducted of core, representative constituencies, notably each municipality’s staff and/or elected officials, Friends of the Fredricksen Library, Fredricksen Board members and staff, among others.

To achieve insights from the broadest Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch constituency possible, the committee partnered with the BRAVO Group to gather opinions, criticisms, and suggestions via an electronic survey of the Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch service areas. Six hundred sixty-three responses were received.

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Finally, paper surveys were available at Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch and could be submitted anonymously there.

Following data acquisition, committee members reviewed the new information, and this document reflects those findings *combined with* significant, still very much relevant elements of the 2017 Plan.

What we learned

Overwhelmingly, the surveys told us that *patrons like Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch. Very much.*

Patrons share a common feeling that the collections and on-line services are plentiful and useful. The physical facility is much praised as an airy, safe haven that facilitates everything from casual reading to tutoring to research to programs, presentations and concerts. Survey respondents value Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch's staff and the help they provide.

In general terms, library users want more – of everything.

Survey data collected showed the following regarding Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch.

- The most important services provided are borrowing books, and other media, on-line collection and account access, professional librarian assistance, access to eBooks and audios, and access to on-line resources.

The following were also deemed “very” or “somewhat important” by at least 37% of the respondents: a quiet place, library computer access, community meeting space, genealogy and local history, assistance with government licenses, apps and permits, the Business & Career Center, and help finding jobs.

- Awareness of children and teen programs is high. Greatest participation is for story time, Kids' STEAM programs, Kid book clubs, kid's yoga, Mission Transition and Young Explorers.
- Similarly, awareness of adult programs is high. Participation in these was the greatest: movie programs, book discussions, gardening programs, the Business & Career Center and Language at the Library.
- Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch rates extraordinarily high in these areas: the library facility, staff helpfulness and friendliness, customer service, on-line services, collection and resource availability, hours of operation, programs, computers and printers, workforce development, and the Story Walk.

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- 92% of survey respondents overall believe Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch’s programs and materials meet the communities’ current needs. 78% of respondents have visited the library in the last month.

Demographic data indicated that survey respondents were predominately women and English was the most spoken language. Respondents lived throughout Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch’s service area. A significant minority of respondents came from outside the service area. Most considered their neighborhood as suburban, with nearly equal shares opting for rural or urban to describe where they live.

Seventy-five percent of those responding possess an undergraduate college degree or higher. Another fifteen percent have some college or an associates’ degree. Unemployment among survey respondents was 5% (as of July, 2022).

Population growth in the service area is significant which is not surprising since Cumberland is the fastest growing county in Pennsylvania. For example, the population of the Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch service area was 81,763 in 2010; today it is 89,602. Notwithstanding that growth, more than a third of those responding were seniors while only one third reported having children under 18. Forty-one percent responding declared incomes of less than \$90,000; sixteen percent cited incomes of less than \$50,000.

There is a slow trend toward greater ethnic diversity within Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch’s service area, a finding confirmed in outreach to local school districts. Municipal representatives see this trend as well and the value that additional community outreach by Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch can bring to new residents, whether programs for English learners, to familiarize them with the library’s offerings, or to be a convener and location for immigrant support groups, among many possible services.

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There were many improvements suggested by respondents.

Increased hours, especially on Saturday and Sunday mornings were sought as were programs presented on weekends for citizens who work during the day or on different shifts. This request covers the gamut of programs offered from entertainment to concerts to education (“how to”). Similarly, programming to allow parents enriching “down time” apart from children should be considered some said.

Among the many specific citations of desired programs, additional space to serve disabled patrons was mentioned as were programs geared to mental health and additional space for meetings, programs and presentation, and many other uses. Lending service in Hampden Township was cited as insufficiently known, as was Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch’s Business & Career Center (though favorably assessed by those familiar with it or have used it).

Staff and patrons alike believe that eliminating fines should be a priority and both believe that collection checkout length should be extended from 2 to 3 weeks.

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Outcomes

Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch Library’s 2017 Strategic Plan for 2018-2021 has served as a dynamic blueprint for action to further strengthen the library as an already strong and appreciated community resource. Its Mission, Vision, Core Values, and Goals were thoughtfully crafted to guide the board and staff philosophically, in policy development and in creation of specific implementation steps. *Significantly, the majority of the 2017 implementation steps have been completed or are ongoing.*

With that in mind the 2022 committee assessed the existing Mission and Vision statements, concluding that each succinctly articulated their respective intent and ought not be changed. They are:

Our Mission: To transform lives through the power of information, imagination and ideas

Our Vision: To be the center for resources and opportunities that meets the education, recreation, and cultural needs of our communities

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Four categories of **Core Values** were also crafted in 2017 and they too have served well as broad guides to the Board’s strategic work.

For consistency’s sake, the 2022 committee has consequently retained the *Core Value categories* used in 2017 with some definitional additions and edits in this 2022 Plan. They are:

2023-2027 Core Values

Relationships:

- Provide outstanding customer service, that is professional, friendly, and personalized
- Deliver exceptional library services that meet fast changing and widely varying needs that can be readily conveyed to users
- Collaborate with the county system and within Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch to foster efficiency, innovation, and creativity
- Creatively seek partnerships that mutually serve the service area’s municipalities, residents, and institutions

Responsiveness:

- Develop dynamic programs, and outreach opportunities to serve the needs of all ages, varying socio-economic groups, different education levels and varying cultures and languages
- Provide timely access to new materials and changing formats/technologies
- Develop a dialogue with residents to further Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch’s understanding of programmatic and collection desires

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Sustainability and Responsible Stewardship

- Maintain fiscal stability to ensure continued, responsive service
- Be transparent to the community both financially and in policy development
- Prioritize revenue expansion from diverse sources
- Establish project priorities to develop budgets that inform active fundraising efforts.
- Assess library departments and board committees to provide long-range succession planning for key staff and board composition

Intellectual Freedom and Privacy:

- Provide free and open access to collections, information, and library services while maintaining personal privacy

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The 2022 committee has adopted in principle and for continued use **Goal Categories 1-3** from the 2017 Plan and added three new goal categories, **Goals 4-6**.

2023-2027 Goals

- Goal 1: Resources
- Goal 2: Partnerships & Outreach
- Goal 3: Capital infrastructure
- Goal 4: Technology
- Goal 5: Marketing communication
- Goal 6: Programs and Activities

Consistent with 2017 methodology, these 2022 Goals have been further defined by bulleted Objectives. They offer greater specificity to guide board members and staff alike during years 2023 through 2026.

Goal 22-1 Resources: Financial, physical space and human resources, among others, are critical to Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch’s ongoing success.

- Prioritize revenue expansion (individual donors, corporate sponsorships and donations, “event” fundraisers, grants, foundation support, municipal and county funding, etc.)
- Build on existing, successful fundraising efforts; seek added fundraising opportunities
- Seek comparative staff compensation data from local and statewide sources
- Identify professional skills needed in recruiting staff, including multilingualism
- Identify board candidates whose professional skills can support library operations
- Ensure volunteers feel valued

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Goal 22-2 Partnerships: Broad outreach to all segments of the service area in tandem with other organizations expands Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch's ability to benefit the community.

- Identify opportunities for inclusive library service to diverse communities
- In partnership with municipalities, explore participating in joint community events
- Increase awareness in the business community and at large of services offered by the Business & Career Center in workforce development, for job seekers and in other ways
- Provide a forum for greater understanding of topics of mutual interest across the service area's municipalities

Goal 22-3 Capital infrastructure

- Assess space needs presently and for the future in a mid- to long-range plan that will also project resource (cost) needs
- Explore any new ways of using existing physical space most efficiently and effectively
- Annually update and prioritize assessment of maintenance needs
- Create a long-term plan for capital projects funding

Goal 22-4 Technology

- Remain technologically current
- Assess in-house needs currently and for the future
- Work collaboratively with the Cumberland County Library System to ensure continued quality back-office and patron services and to expand services as identified
- Consider creating or recommending creation of a short-term task group of local information technology practitioners and experts to help to identify IT trends

Goal 22-5 Marketing Communications

- Tell Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch's stories of service, success, and hospitality widely and often
- Assess the quality, quantity, type and efficacy of current marketing and public relations efforts
- Develop an integrated marketing/public relations plan for Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch
- Explore creation of a Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch brand that can be applied consistently to Cleve J Fredricksen Library and East Pennsboro Branch activities, programs, the Business & Career Center, etc.
- Further explore marketing in tandem with service area municipalities
- Consider ways to best reach new residents, including in new housing and apartment developments
- Consider seeking a *pro bono* relationship with a local marketing/public relations practitioner

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Goal 22-6 Programs and Activities:

- Assess existing programs for children, teens, adult and senior populations to ensure current needs of each group are being met
- Consider needs of single parents and those of residents with non-traditional schedules
- Retain and expand existing programs to serve multilingual residents
- Identify potential programmatic needs of the small business community
- Evaluate the need for additional summer programs for children
- Review the Business & Career Center's programs based on experience to date
- Identify community needs that can be met through library programming and resources