

# Craven-Pamlico Regional Library Strategic Plan 2020-2024

## Mission Statement

*Current:* To create young learners and foster lifelong learning, Craven-Pamlico-Regional Library provides informational, recreational, and educational materials, ample facilities, knowledgeable staff, and access to the online world.

*Proposed:* The Craven-Pamlico Regional Library enriches, educates, and inspires our community by providing opportunities to gather, participate, create, and engage.

# Introduction

Craven-Pamlico Regional Library (CPRL) developed a five-year strategic plan focused on how the library may best serve the community. The role of libraries has evolved with changes in technology, demographic shifts, and community needs. The strategic planning process serves as a valuable means of aligning library services with community needs and was identified by the library board as a means of establishing priorities in a climate where municipal, county, and state budgets are tight.

Craven-Pamlico Regional Library is dedicated to bringing literacy, a love of reading, and community connections to our Craven and Pamlico Counties and would like to build upon our current foundation of committed service.

One of the common themes that emerged in the collection of data was the strong sense of community within and between the counties and the need of CPRL to not only evolve to meet the needs of the community, but the necessity to inform the public of the services offered. We view Craven-Pamlico Regional Library as a key asset that enriches the lives of those who live, work, and recreate in Craven and Pamlico Counties. As such, we seek to enhance library services in order to meet the 21st century needs of our community.

The strategic plan guides the library in the following roles:

- a hub for literacy and lifelong learning
- an access point for technologies
- trusted source of information
- a place to gather

The library is committed to utilizing the strategic plan as a framework for thoughtful and informed decisions that will further its mission of service to the community.

## Strategic Planning Process

A strategic planning committee was formed that included the library director, a representative from the library board, and citizens of Craven, Pamlico and Carteret Counties. Members of the Strategic Planning Committee included local business owners, and a variety of citizens who utilize the Craven-Pamlico Regional Library on all levels - from not at all to weekly usage, as well as print readers to solely technology users. The strategic planning committee developed the goals and objectives of the strategic plan based on the following data and information that was gathered during the planning process.

- North Carolina State Library Annual Report data
- American Community Survey data (U.S. Census Bureau)
- Integrated Library System data (patron demographics & circulation data)
- Discussion with library staff
- CPRL Board of Trustees Survey
- Committee members' community conversations

# Strategic Plan Goals

## Strategic Goal—Space

*Provide library spaces that meet the desires and evolving needs of our community for resources, services, and programming to increase knowledge, expand skills, and provide a “third space” to gather.*

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### Objectives

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- A. Develop a communication and advocacy strategy to build an understanding that the library’s footprint needs to change in order to meet the needs of the community
- B. Assess the current space and identify potential solutions with input from experts and the community
- C. Implement achievable improvements that will enhance patron and staff experience
- D. Develop partnerships with community stakeholders

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### Measures for Success

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- Creation of a communication and advocacy plan
- Provide an assessment of the space, options, and needs
- Potential options are presented to the community to solicit feedback
- Improvements/alterations are made to the library space
- Increased use of library spaces
- Increase in partnerships

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Input from the CPRL Strategic Committee members and community conversations referenced the need for a welcoming space that does not require paying for goods or services. A space where members of the community can meet, study (private and group study), and access the internet. Our current space, including the décor, is a reflection of the era in which it was constructed rather than present-day libraries, which are designed to be inviting spaces for the community to gather and linger. The outdated decor was noted in community conversations, as well as the staff and library board discussions. Comments included the need to have spaces that serve different functions and allow various noise levels, the need to create warm and inviting spaces, and the need to alter the image of the CPRL facilities from academic to community centers "where all ages feel welcome - from the senior who reads the paper to the teen who wants to hang-out and study with friends." The Strategic Planning Committee recommended that "CPRL libraries and the regional library itself should create a comprehensive list of needs and wants and these lists should be kept current."

## Strategic Goal—Outreach and Community Engagement

*Increase community awareness of the library's resources, services, and policies through clear, consistent, and engaging communications designed to reach all community members.*

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### Objectives

- A. Increase visibility of the library and awareness of what the library offers to infrequent or non-library users
- B. Increase outreach efforts to schools and seek partnerships with youth organizations such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and 4-H
- C. Increase outreach and services to rural areas of Craven and Pamlico
- D. Develop new and existing community partnerships
- E. Build community involvement in the library

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### Measures for Success

- Completion of a marketing action plan
- Increased cardholders
- Increased programming attendance
- Increase in partnerships
- Increase outreach services
- Increase CPRL virtual footprint via website and social media

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The community conversations highlighted the gap in knowledge regarding library services between library users and non-users. Non-users associated the library with print books and were less likely to be aware of digital materials and resources that were available. The majority of the Trustees agreed that "CPRL should develop and implement a public relations plan to communicate the good work being done by the region and the libraries in the system." A public relations plan shall include implementation of a "21st century" regional website with pages for each library in the system. The Strategic Planning Committee felt that the virtual footprint of the CPRL system was lacking and required development. Additional recommendations included a report on impact of library services annually (at end of fiscal year) to the various Trustee groups and to the public which would be posted on various websites and a central point-of-contact for publicity. All libraries (and administration) in the CPRL should issue press releases not just for programs, but for new equipment to be used by the public, recognition of staff, etc. The Strategic Planning Committee recommended creating templates for staff and management to submit to a centralized public relations representative for review and approval.

## Strategic Goal—Improving services, programming, and resource use

*Ensure that our collections, services, programs, and space reflect, serve, and share the diversity of our community.*

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### Objectives

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- A. Evaluate service model and staffing levels throughout the library with the goal of balancing community needs with professional staffing
- B. Increase overall library use by developing service strategies that are responsive to our community
- C. Increase usage of underutilized resources

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### Measures for Success

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- Increase in programming attendance
  - Increase in new attendees to programming
  - Increase in staff satisfaction
  - Increase in usage of underutilized resources
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The role of libraries continues to evolve with technological advances and the communities we serve. Libraries are far more than providers of physical materials and youth programming, and the library seeks to serve our entire community. Community conversations revealed potential opportunities for the library to expand its reach. For example, school libraries do not necessarily have full-time librarians or library aides, and teachers may not have time to prepare book talks or to provide instruction in database use, citation managers, or search strategies. There may be opportunities to partner with local scouting groups and other youth organizations. These are opportunities for the library to increase awareness and use of the library, but we need to be mindful of budgetary constraints, including staffing levels. Our current staffing model presumes patrons come to the library for library services and does not support additional outreach activities. Furthermore, it presumes that the library director is primarily onsite during library hours. Expanding outreach and on site programming will require additional staff time for preparation and implementation.

## Strategic Goal—Organizational Structural Support

*Ensure short and long-term fiscal sustainability through continuous exploration of funding opportunities and sources to meet and support the ever-evolving service needs of our community.*

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## Objectives

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- A. Identify new opportunities for funding, including grants, to support library services
  - B. Establish fundraising initiatives to support library services and facility needs
  - C. Develop and implement advocacy efforts with city leaders and civic stakeholders
  - D. Equip the Library Board to be advocates
  - E. Revise the library mission statement
  - F. Establish a library foundation
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## Measures for Success

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- Number of partnerships
  - Increased awareness of the library and its role in the community
  - Financial stability
  - Transparency
  - A revised mission statement
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The library is an important asset that needs to be updated to meet the needs of the community and make CPRL a more attractive place to live, work, and visit. Maintaining and updating the facility to meet the evolving needs of the community requires securing additional sources of funding. The library recognizes the importance of being good stewards of public funds and the public trust and strives to use these funds wisely. At the same time, the resources and services we provide must continue to meet the evolving needs of the community. Identifying and capitalizing upon new opportunities for funding will allow the library to be better equipped to serve the community and meet their 21st century needs. Examples were given of lack of consistent policies and procedures from library to library by committee board members. Strategies recommended that policies and procedures be consistent at all locations and that "CPRL should develop needed regional policy and procedure manuals identified in the proposed Strategic Plan and in the NC Public Library Standards." These policy and procedure manuals include:

- a. Operations
- b. Fiscal
- c. Website and social media
- d. Volunteer
- e. Regional Trustees and Local Trustees

The Strategic Planning committee and CPRL staff strongly felt that CPRL needs to update to a consistent look in print and online. The new logo and graphics will need to be developed in time to be incorporated into the website re-design.

## Strategic Goal—Culture of Planning

*Continuously develop and implement plans to strengthen our staffing, buildings and grounds, and finances.*

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### Objectives

- A. Develop and implement a plan for ongoing maintenance, preventative maintenance, and capital improvement strategies
- B. Develop a building and grounds plan
- C. Develop a technology plan
- D. Develop strong relationships with organizations, groups, and city departments that will help the library accomplish its mission to serve the community

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### Measures for Success

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- Improved decision making and financial planning
- Increased efficiency
- Increased staff satisfaction
- Improve staff communication and awareness
- Plan for future building needs
- Plan for future technology

Creating and implementing plans will improve efficiency and promote informed fiscal planning that will enhance our services. An aging facility requires a systematic approach to maintenance and replacement in order for the library to be proactive rather than reactive. For example, in the future we would like to avoid finding ourselves in a situation like we are in now--running a nearly unsupported version of Windows on our computers. It is difficult to predict the future, but working to institute processes that respond to changes, trends, and other factors influencing the nature of library operations will help Provide seamless service, evenly distribute expenditures, and meet our community's needs. An emphasis on planning will reduce the likelihood of unexpected expenditures and enhance the library's ability to cope with unanticipated expenditures.

## Ongoing Planning

The CPRL Library Director and staff will work in conjunction with the Library Board of Trustees to prioritize and coordinate activities from this plan. A complete activity and implementation plan will be created by the CPRL Library Director and will serve as an implementation guide during the life of this plan. The library will consider available resources, including funding and staff time; changing conditions locally, regionally, and statewide; and opportunities that arise to innovate during the implementation of the plan. CPC Regional Board voted for current members of the Strategic Planning Committee to continue to serve on an as needed basis to monitor progress and make recommendations for modifications. All members accepted.

The library board and library director will review progress on a yearly basis.

# Acknowledgements

We thank the communities of Craven, Pamlico and Carteret Counties for your ongoing support. We appreciate the time and thoughtfulness of those who participated in community conversations. Your input informed our strategic plan and helped ensure that the library will serve the needs of our community.

The library director is grateful for the dedication and time of the strategic planning committee. Their commitment and thoughtfulness throughout the development of this plan were invaluable. The strategic planning committee members extend their appreciation to the library board for their support of the strategic planning process.

## **2018-19 Strategic Planning Committee**

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Kat Clowers            | Interim Director/Head Librarian--Pamlico County, Chair of SPC |
| Dennis Ball            | Accountant--Volunteer--New Bern                               |
| Judy Bird              | CPC RLS Board of Trustees--Havelock                           |
| Perry Harker           | CPC RLS Board of Trustees--Carteret County                    |
| Tyler Harris           | Volunteer--New Bern   |
| Judy Hills             | Volunteer--consultant, Friends of New Bern Library, Secretary |
| Cassandra Hunsucker    | Head Librarian--New Bern                                      |
| Susan Moffat-Thomas    | Volunteer--New Bern   |
| Susan Wilder Volunteer | Friends of Down East Library--Carteret County                 |
| Ben Bowditch           | Pamlico County Board of Trustees, Chair                       |

## **2019-2020 Craven-Pamlico Regional Board**

### CRAVEN COUNTY

Commissioner Jason Jones, Chair

Judy Bird, Vice-Chair

Lynn Gonzalez

Commissioner George Liner

### PAMLICO COUNTY

Roberta Jones

John Prescott

Commissioner Paul Delamar III

CPRL would also like to thank the CPRL staff for their support and input.

Adopted on \_\_\_\_\_ by the Craven-Pamlico Regional Library Board of Trustees.