Loudoun County Public Library
Strategic Plan - June 2016

Executive Summary

As Loudoun County has grown over the past few decades, Loudoun County Public Library has grown to meet the needs of a rapidly changing community. It enjoys strong public support, outstanding customer satisfaction, and a prominent place in the life of the county.

As we look to 2020, we have undertaken a strategic planning process that considers the state of Loudoun County as well as the role of libraries in a world of global interconnectedness, digital media, and rapid change. We have identified five key trends and challenges, and developed strategic initiatives to address those challenges by harnessing the strengths and opportunities unique to Loudoun County Public Library.

1. As Loudoun County becomes increasingly diverse, as community infrastructure matures, and the population continues to grow, reaching the broadest possible audience for library programs and services is essential and increasingly complex.
   Strategic initiatives addressing these opportunities include:
   o *Explore the unmet library service needs of the community and resources available to meet those needs in western Loudoun County.*
   o *Investigate options to deal with growth in demand at Ashburn.*
   o *Investigate options to replace the building at Purcellville.*
2. The Library's mandate to serve all County residents can help facilitate residents' full participation in the civic, cultural, and economic life of Loudoun County.
   Strategic initiatives addressing these opportunities include:
   o *Expand capabilities to meet the demand of the increasing population of those unable to access Library facilities physically.*
   o *Investigate new options for a closer relationship with the Thomas Balch Library or other specialized libraries in Loudoun County.*
   o *Provide increased opportunities for community participation in Library programs by exploring new programming initiatives, incorporating new resources (such as remote and web-based programs), and expanding program locations to non-Library facilities in order to reach the broadest audiences.*
3. Given Loudoun County's high level of educational achievement – and its high proportion of families with children -- a world-class educational system is vitally important. The Library must develop an even closer partnership with the County education community: public, private, home-school, from PK -20. It is critical that all children have access to educational opportunities through the Library and its

associated partners. The Library also must work closely with the County's business community, including the technology industry, tourism, agribusiness, and environmental sustainability.

Strategic initiatives addressing these opportunities include:

- o *Investigate opportunities for a partnership with Loudoun County Public School's Academies of Loudoun; this may include co-location, creation of special collections, or other strategies that promote STEM education and collaboration with the Loudoun County Public School system.*
- o *Invest in and promote new community resource initiatives in Library locations to promote 21st century skills, such as makerspaces and other similar programs.*
- o *Investigate mutually beneficial collaboration with Loudoun County business community.*

4. Rapidly changing technology requires libraries to effectively communicate how, where, and when to use their services. Branches serve as neighborhood learning and cultural institutions, while the system provides access to a wide range of print and digital resources and creates countywide strategic initiatives that meet local community needs. While digital resources are essential to provide broad access to a wide variety of materials, the importance of the library as a community gathering place, center for collaboration, creativity and innovation, and catalyst for engaged civic life cannot be overstated.

Strategic initiatives addressing these opportunities include:

- o *Systematically promote community awareness and use of electronic resources provided by the Library.*
- o *Focus on the professional development of staff in order to improve service and be more responsive to the needs of the community.*
- o *Investigate development and fundraising options to continue and expand programs such as One Book/One Community, which are important catalysts for community involvement and personal connection.*

The Board of Trustees, Library staff, County leadership, and community members will work together to fulfill these goals. They are, of necessity, dynamic; given the rapid pace of change, we will revisit them yearly and revise as necessary.

Strategic Planning Process

The initiatives outlined in this Strategic Plan were developed through conscientious planning, consideration of the Library's recent achievements and goals for future success, examination of available resources, and considerable input from stakeholders, including Library patrons and staff. Library patrons were given the opportunity to provide feedback on potential Library initiatives through online and in-branch surveys (November 2014). An internal survey of staff (November 2014) and interviews with community stakeholders (February 2015) also provided important information and perspective.

Important stakeholders and valued partners in the future success of Loudoun County Public Library include Library staff, the Library Board of Trustees, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, the Loudoun Library Foundation, branch Advisory Boards and Friends Groups, Loudoun County Public Schools, and the residents of Loudoun County.

This five-year plan will be reviewed, revised (if necessary), and reconfirmed by the Library Board of Trustees each calendar year

Mission Statement

The Loudoun County Public Library, the community's information center, provides free and equal access to a full variety of library resources and innovative technologies to enhance the quality of life and meet the informational, educational and cultural interests of the entire community.

Vision Statement

Loudoun County Public Library builds community by nurturing an environment where the joy of reading and learning is celebrated and people and ideas flourish.

Loudoun County Public Library: an overview

Loudoun County Public Library (LCPL) was established as the County library system on March 20, 1973, following a referendum completed in 1972. The Library is financed by an annual budget determined by the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors and, as a publicly funded institution, is accountable to the taxpayers. This funding is derived from personal property taxes and state aid from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Loudoun County Public Library operates under the direction of the Library Board of Trustees. These trustees are appointed by the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors. Trustees are selected for their interest in the Library and its role in the community and their willingness to devote time and effort necessary to carry out the duties of a trustee. The Library Board has control of the expenditure of all funds in the library budget. They work with the library director and staff in the study, evaluation and development of library policies and long-range plans.

The LCPL system comprises eight physical branch locations as well as a mobile Outreach Services unit and a central Administration office. The branches range in size from 4,540 to 42,000 square feet, and serve a population of approximately 353,300 residents.

In 1982, the Loudoun County government initiated a Capital Improvement Project which led to a referendum in November 1984. Voters in the County finalized funding for the construction of four branch libraries (Cascades, Rust, Lovettsville, and Middleburg) and the renovation and expansion of Purcellville Library. In 1999, Loudoun County voters approved the construction of the Ashburn Library, which opened in August 2003. In December 2004, Lovettsville reopened after undergoing a renovation and expansion that provided a meeting room and staff office space. On February 23, 2013, more than 6,000 people attended the opening of the eighth branch of the library system, Gum Spring Library, located in Stone Ridge. On September 10, 2013, the Middleburg Library was re-opened after the successful completion of the Middleburg Library Advisory Board's campaign to raise private funds to renovate and expand the branch to twice its original size.

During 2015:
- 5.8 million books, audiobooks, DVDs and movies were checked out from the library, which represents 15 items per Loudoun resident.
- 1.7 million people visited the library to seek answers to their questions, attend programs, check out materials, and be part of the community.
- 19,000 people signed up for library cards.
- 76,000 people used the library to host meetings for their civic, arts, historical, and educational groups.
- 169,000 teens visited the A.V. Symington Teen Center at Rust Library, the Gum Spring Library Teen Center and the After Hours Teen Center at Cascades Library for studying, socializing, and creative pursuits.

- 9,000 people in senior centers and senior living communities were visited by the library's Outreach Services program.
- 244,000 people came to the library for Early Literacy storytimes, computer training, author lectures, and book discussions.
- 1.3 million online visits linked patrons to databases, e-books, audiobooks, digital movies and digital music.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS	2013	2014	2015
Library Card Holders	193,333	212,135	230,151
Percentage of County Residents Holding Cards		60%	
Library Visits	1,624,140	1,745,846	1,729,677
Print Circulation	3,616,861	4,106,542	4,029,954
Non-print Circulation (audio books, DVDs, Music CDs)	1,546,020	1,582,142	1,419,113
Total Circulation	5,342,072	5,987,870	5,849,317
Electronic resource use	901,970	995,817	812,648
Downloadables	179,191	298,186	400,240
Number of Library Programs	5,506	6,731	7,673
Program Attendance	200,108	226,657	243,746

The FY2015 library budget totalled $14.1 million, including support from the County of Loudoun, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and income from trust funds, gifts, room rental, and fines and fees. This represents an investment of $40 per Loudoun County resident.

Patron surveys from FY15 show a 98 percent overall satisfaction rating with Library Services.

Collection Development

The goal of Loudoun County Public Library is to provide the citizens of Loudoun County with a range of materials in a variety of print and non-print formats to meet their

informational, cultural, educational, and recreational needs and interests. The current collection stands at approximately 849,939 items.

To meet this goal, the library system has developed procedures for selecting, evaluating, re-evaluating, and withdrawing materials. The procedures are intended to assure that the collection reflects contemporary ideas as well as traditional points of view and materials are available in diverse media.

The library system endeavors to provide a range of opinions, majority and minority, on all subjects and does not exclude materials on the basis of the author's or producer's point of view. The library system also attempts to avoid collections that reflect inordinate responsiveness to a single point of view.

Individual use of library materials is a private and personal matter. All citizens are free to reject for themselves materials of which they may disapprove; no citizen may restrict the freedom of use and access for others. Responsibility for the reading, listening, and viewing of library materials by children rests with their parents or legal guardians and not with the library staff. Selection of library materials is not inhibited by the possibility that materials may come into the possession of children.

Suggestions from the public regarding selection, retention, or reconsideration of materials are encouraged and are reviewed promptly.

The library world is experiencing great and rapid change with the growth of individuals' personal access to rapidly evolving mobile devices. As eBook, downloadable audio, streaming music and video capabilities evolve, LCPL staff is exploring the products offered in the marketplace to determine the best media to add to the collection and at what point the medium has matured to provide content that will enrich the Library's collection and be of use to its patrons.

As the publishing world adapts and reformulates itself to the digitizing of information, staff is working in conjunction with the national library community to improve delivery of e-content to patrons. The goal is the development of delivery systems from e-content providers that will allow patrons to use the providers' "products" through the LCPL catalog without departing the Library site and re-registering. This is now possible for the e-titles provided by Overdrive.

Public Services

Adult Services
Adult Services staff meet the needs of adult patrons, including:

- Finding information in response to specific questions

- Helping patrons find information for themselves
- Teaching people how to use library resources and how to do library research
- In-person assistance provided at the Information Desk
- Remote assistance available via phone or "Talk to Us" service
- Developing engaging and informative programming focused on lifelong learning and community needs, including:
    - Book discussion groups
    - Technology programs
    - ESOL programming
    - Cultural programs
- Assistance with library technology use, including:
    - Internet and wireless access
    - E-readers, tablets, and other devices
    - Online library databases and E-books

Youth Services

Youth Services staff develop services, programs, and materials intended to meet the needs of children ages 0 to 11 years old, including:

- Providing information assistance and reader's advisory to children and parents
- Developing partnerships with area schools
- Conducting engaging and educational programs for children, and developing literacy and learning workshops for parents, caregivers, and teachers
- Maintaining and promoting the Youth Services collection
- Working closely with educators to meet instructional needs; in FY2014, LCPL staff conducted 211 school visits and spoke to over 30,000 students and teachers.

Programs are offered based on community needs and available resources, with a particular emphasis on reinforcing early literacy skills and supporting STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) interests. Programs include:

- Storytimes
- Babygarten (0-18 months)
- Rhythm, Rhyme, and Tune Time: Early Literacy Through Music (ages 0-4)
- Open Door Storytime (ages 3-5)
- 1000 Books Before Kindergarten
- Every Child Ready to Read Workshops for Parents
- Summer Reading Program
- Book Clubs
- 123 Math & Science (ages 8-11)
- Picturing America (ages 7-11)
- Social Studies and Me (ages 5-7)

Teen Services

LCPL's teen services staff focuses on services, programs, and materials intended to meet

the needs of residents from age 12 to 18. Two libraries -- Rust and Gum Springs -- both have dedicated teen centers, and Cascades hosts the award-winning After Hours Teen Center, attracting more than 100 each week to socialize with friends while enjoying pizza and a special activity.

Programs for teens focus on creativity, academic enrichment, arts and culture, and STEM:

- Book Club
- Writing Club
- Teen Advisory Board
- Anime Club
- Movie events
- "It's All Write" Short Story Contest
- Summer Reading Program
- Film Festival
- AnimeCon
- Teen Read Week
- Teen Tech Week
- Photography Class
- Dance Workshops
- Habits of Successful College Students
- Gamer's Union for Teens With Asperger's

Programming

At the systemwide level, the Programming Division brings authors, special guests, and programs to the branches, Loudoun County Public Schools, Juvenile Detention Center and Douglass School (an alternative school in the community). Each year these presentations support the popular reading and societal interests of youth.

The Division works with staff to develop system-wide programming that encourages early literacy and provides academic support. The Division researches and applies for grants that support the themes of, and allows for enhancement of the presentations. A variety of children's programming is developed by the Division that brings authors, entertainment and laughter to the young people. The recent addition of a Youth Programming Coordinator at the systemwide level has enhanced the library's ability to serve youth and teens across the county, and better support the youth and teen staff.

The Division brings a variety of adult programming and exhibits to the Library. These presentations are primarily grant-funded and range from authors and artists to history and humanities series. They build community, spark conversation and collaboration, and provide useful information for county residents.

Each year the Library is privileged to present through its various gift funds programming and special events that foster philanthropy and meet the specification of the

benefactors. These programs include the James Horton Program for the Arts Gift Fund, the Irwin Uran Gift Fund, and the A.V. Symington Gift Fund.

The Next Chapter Book Club – in partnership with the Paxton Campus – offers regular opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to read and learn together, talk about books, and make friends in a relaxed, community setting. That program initiated many other programs and regularly-scheduled visits to the library by groups of young people and adults with intellectual disabilities.

The Division works with many community non-profits and other County departments to present programs and events, including a dozen or more each May in advocacy and honor of Mental Health Awareness Month.

Governance and community support

The Library is governed by a nine-member **Board of Trustees**, appointed by the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors. The Trustees are responsible for library policies and make budget recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The Library Director, Chang Liu, reports to the Library Board of Trustees, providing guidance, leadership, and vision for the library.

Library Advisory Boards and Friends Groups: Each branch has its own advisory board or friends group; these groups act as advocates for the libraries and raise supplemental funds. This fundraising may be devoted to the purchase of additional library materials or the support of special programs and exhibits.

Loudoun Library Foundation is a non-profit organization run by volunteers to raise awareness and funds for public libraries in Loudoun County, including LCPL, Thomas Balch Library in Leesburg, and Sporting Library in Middleburg. The Foundation's annual used book sale helps fund the Summer Reading Program and other specific requests throughout the year.

Community overview

Loudoun County Public Library serves a community marked by diversity, growth and change.

Loudoun County Population Trends, 2000-2020

2000 Census:	142,712	
2010 Census	312,311	84%
2014	350,000	12%
2020 (forecast)	417,987	19%

Compared to the Commonwealth and the nation as a whole, Loudoun County's population is…

- younger, better educated, and more affluent
- has a higher percentage of "family" households
- has a higher percentage of working residents

While more residents are both living and working in Loudoun (compared to 2006), a high percentage of workers do commute outside the county for work or residence, limiting their time at home or in the Loudoun County community.

And, despite the fact that Loudoun County's median household income is more than double the national median household income, there remain a substantial number of families where the household income is significantly below average. In 2011, households with an income of $200,000 or more accounted for almost 20,000 households or 18.2% of households in Loudoun County; the largest amount in any income cohort. Households earning less than $50,000 accounted for approximately 17,600 households (16.5%).

Compared to the Washington DC metro region as a whole, Loudoun County also has a higher percentage of family and married-couple households.

Median Household Income	$116,848	Ranked #1 nationally in 2013 for jurisdictions with a population of 65,000 or greater. Has been ranked #1 since 2007. Ranked #2 nationally for the 2008-2012 period (out of all jurisdictions in the nation). Income is more than double the national median household income.
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	56.7%	Ranked #10 nationally in 2013 for jurisdictions with a population of 65,000 or greater. Ranked #9 nationally for the 2008-2012 period out of all jurisdictions in the nation.
Median Age	35.2 years	The new housing stock draws young families to Loudoun. Therefore, Loudoun's population is remaining young, unlike much of the nation.
Households (Family)	Loudoun County: 77%	Washington MSA: 66%
Non-Family	Loudoun County: 23%	Washington MSA: 34%
Family Households With Children	Loudoun County: 60%	Washington MSA: 47%
Married Couples	Loudoun County: 84%	Washington MSA: 74%
Labor Force Participation	Loudoun County: 76%	USA: 64%
Commuting – Residents Working and Living in Loudoun County	2011: 46.4%	2006: 44.0%

Over the ten-year period from 2000-2010, Loudoun County became much more ethnically diverse, with a significant increase in the number of Hispanic residents (from 11,000 in 2000 to 38,000 in 2010, an increase of 249 percent) and the number of Asian residents quintupling (from 9,000 in 2000 to about 46,000 in 2010).

Between 2000 and 2010, the number of senior residents (65 and over) in the County doubled, and the percentage of seniors within the county is projected to grow over the next 15 years.

Seniors (65 and over)   1990   5,223 (6%)
                            2000   9,538 (7%)
                            2010   19,804 (7%)
                            2020   36,191 (10%)
                            2030   56,493 (13%)

Loudoun County's business and economic profile has changed significantly, as well, during the past ten years.

- Data centers occupy more than 40 buildings and 4.3 million square feet in the county.
- The data center industry has grown over 181% since the year 2000.
- The State of Virginia has the #1 highest concentration of technology workers in the nation according to TechAmerica.
- Up to 70% of the world's internet traffic passes through Loudoun County on a daily basis.
- Information and communications technology is the largest industry cluster in Loudoun County, which employs 23,000 people and represents 19% of Loudoun's private employment.
- More than 900 federal government prime contractors call Loudoun County home.
- In 2010, 323,000 tons of air cargo passed through Loudoun County.
- Nearly $100 million is invested each year in biomedical research through Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Janelia Farm Research Campus, located in Loudoun.
- Loudoun is also home to over 1,400 farms, totaling 142,000+ acres.

Challenges, Opportunities, and Strategic Initiatives

1. As Loudoun County becomes increasingly diverse, as community infrastructure matures, and the population continues to grow, reaching the broadest possible audience for library programs and services is essential and increasingly complex. Eastern and Western Loudoun differ significantly: in population density, ethnic and racial diversity, socioeconomic diversity, and the employment and business community. Meeting the needs of two very different areas of Loudoun County presents both a challenge and an opportunity, and one that requires us to work closely with community partners throughout the County.

   Strategic initiatives addressing these opportunities include:
   - *Explore the unmet library service needs of the community and resources available to meet those needs in western Loudoun County.*
   - *Investigate options to deal with growth in demand at Ashburn.*
   - *Investigate options to replace the building at Purcellville.*

2. The Library's mandate to serve all County residents can help facilitate residents' full participation in the civic, cultural, and economic life of Loudoun County. By assessing the needs of the County's varied communities -- in partnership with County agencies, non-profits, and community and business leaders – the Library can develop programs and services that meet community needs.

   The growth of the senior population in Loudoun County has significant implications for transportation, social services, and library services. Enhancing the quality of life for Loudoun's seniors will require new approaches to lifelong learning, in partnership with county agencies, senior living communities, and community organizations.

   Strategic initiatives addressing these opportunities include:
   - *Expand capabilities to meet the demand of the increasing population of those unable to access Library facilities physically.*
   - *Investigate new options for a closer relationship with the Thomas Balch Library or other specialized libraries in Loudoun County.*
   - *Provide increased opportunities for community participation in Library programs by exploring new programming initiatives, incorporating new resources (such as remote and web-based programs), and expanding program locations to non-Library facilities in order to reach the broadest audiences.*

3. Given its high level of educational achievement – and its high proportion of families with children -- a world-class educational system is vitally important to the Loudoun County community. The Loudoun County Public Library is currently an important component of that system. Opportunities exist, however, to become more closely allied and aligned with the K-20 educational system in the county, and the Library can strategically seize those opportunities, developing an even closer partnership.

   The development of the technology industry in Loudoun County also has strategic implications for the Library and the community it serves. The intellectual capital, creative energy, and global reach of Loudoun's economy provide fertile ground for collaboration and support of the Library's mission. The need to adapt libraries for the digital age impels us to find creative and supportive advocates among Loudoun's technology community. In addition, Western Loudoun's strong economy focused on tourism, agribusiness, and environmental sustainability provides opportunities for collaboration around themes and issues unique to those communities.

   Strategic initiatives addressing these opportunities include:
   - *Investigate opportunities for a partnership with Loudoun County Public School's Academies of Loudoun; this may include co-location, creation of special collections, or other strategies that promote STEM education and collaboration with the Loudoun County Public School system.*
   - *Invest in and promote new community resource initiatives in Library locations to promote 21st century skills, such as makerspaces and other similar programs.*
   - *Investigate mutually beneficial collaboration with Loudoun County business community.*

4. Rapidly changing technology requires libraries to effectively communicate how, where, and when to use their services. In a 2012 study, for example, the Pew Research Center found that the broader public, not just e-book readers, were generally not aware they could borrow e-books from libraries. While Loudoun County Public Library has done an outstanding job of reaching and teaching its customers (as evidenced by the growth in usage of new library resources), this is an ongoing effort, and one that requires an investment of time and expertise.

   Branches can and do serve as neighborhood learning and cultural institutions, while the system can both provide access to a wide range of print and digital resources and create countywide strategic initiatives that meet local community needs.

The importance of the library as a community gathering place, center for collaboration, creativity and innovation, and catalyst for engaged civic life cannot be overstated. In a rapidly growing and changing Loudoun County, the library can bring individuals together to realize their individual and community potential.

Strategic initiatives addressing these opportunities include:
- o *Systematically promote community awareness and use of electronic resources provided by the Library.*
- o *Focus on the professional development of staff in order to improve service and be more responsive to the needs of the community.*
- o *Investigate development and fundraising options to continue and expand programs such as One Book/One Community, which are important catalysts for community involvement and personal connection.*