



Mount Vernon Public Library

Long-Range Strategic Plan

2022-2025

ADOPTION

The Long-Range Strategic Plan 2022-2025
was adopted by unanimous vote of
The Mount Vernon Public Library Board of Trustees
on October 28, 2021

Dr. Vivien Salmon, President
Chanese V. Coleman, Vice President
Oscar Davis, Jr., Secretary
Judy Williams-Davis, Trustee
Hope Marable, Trustee

Timur Davis, Director

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

March 19, 2021, Mount Vernon Public Library (MVPL) celebrated one-hundred and twenty-five years of having been chartered by The University of the State of New York, now NYSED, (New York State Education Department). The last remaining of five Andrew Carnegie endowed libraries in Westchester County, it hailed as Westchester's Central Library and is prodigiously known for its distinct collections, architecture, unsurpassed advances in technology, voluminous periodical section, historical Mills Law Library, children's library, and landscaped gardens.

On behalf of the board of trustees, it is a pleasure to present you with Mount Vernon Public Library's Long-Range Strategic Plan, FY2022 through FY2025. Herein was a collaborative effort of in-depth research and analysis, achieved with the invaluable insight of our staff, patrons, local historians, and neighboring libraries.

The end result is an attainable endeavor to fulfill the library's mission by enhancing our existing resources of space, collections, programs and services. This plan identifies the values, priorities, and long-term goals of consideration for our executive director, trustees, and community stakeholders.

To all who recognize the value of an engaging and vibrant hub of higher learning and education, we ask that you invest further by partnering with Mount Vernon Public Library toward the fulfillment of these aspirations. Mount Vernon, New York is an ever-evolving, culturally diverse city that has produced renowned citizens across the globe; among them are E.B. White, Pulitzer Prize winning author of "Stuart Little" and "Charlotte's Webb"; Television Hall of Fame Inductee, Susan Harris, writer, producer, and creator of Emmy Award winning sitcoms "The Golden Girls" and "Soap". This rich, but far too briefly described history is why, with the unwavering dedication of patrons, trustees, and staff, The Mount Vernon Public Library is an enduring community refuge, that will continue to elevate and inspire civility and academia for generations to come.

Hope Marable, Chair

BOARD VISION

THE LIBRARY'S MISSION

“The Mount Vernon Public Library connects people, information, and technology, to build community partnerships and inspire ideas”

THE LIBRARY'S VISION

“To provide opportunity and space, whilst in the pursuit of intellectual success”

SHARED VALUES

We uphold our patrons rights to privacy and intellectual freedom

We promote universal language, literacy, proficiency, and innovation

We are closing the digital divide via state of the art technology

We foster democracy, civility, and inclusion

We maintain strong partnerships with the support of a professionally skilled staff that provides exceptional customer service to people of all ages, interests, and abilities, with fairness and equality

We provide a safe, accessible, accommodating atmosphere for all patrons

We inspire lifelong habits of learning, self improvement, and self-expression

We maintain unique and current collections of books, information, and data, that meets the varied needs of our community

ABOUT MOUNT VERNON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Originally housed in The Mount Vernon Board of Education's Sophie J. Mee Administration Office, Mount Vernon Public Library was chartered by The State of New York in March of 1896.

In 1904, philanthropist and American industrialist, Andrew Carnegie, endowed \$50,000.00 for the library's construction. The end result is a neoclassical structure designed by American architect Edward Lippincott Tilton, whom, along with fellow alumni of Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris, William A. Boring, co-designed The Immigration Station at Ellis Island, New York Harbor, New York.

In 1909, Carnegie endowed a gift of \$20,000.00 toward additional library space. A second space was added in 1925, and an adjacent property was purchased in 1929 for expansion. 1937 marked the ground breaking for a third building construction at the south wing completed in 1938, thereby shaping the existing structure that appears today.

The Mount Vernon Public Library serves a dense population of about 80,000 residents. Upon becoming a school district library in 2014, an enthusiastic public approved over \$4 million for the library's first year as an independent institution; to this end emerged a reprised commitment on behalf of the trustees, director and staff, to partner with the city's stakeholders in the reassessment of library and community shared values.

Over the past 25 years, Mount Vernon, New York has evolved into a bustling urban city, but the library remains a staple that is very much at the heart of our culturally diverse community.

LIBRARY AT-A-GLANCE

COLLECTIONS

The library's director and administrative staff are currently redesigning our logo, marketing, and promotional items. The website is being recreated, and our social media and digital platforms are expanding. The library will maintain its special relationships with state, county, and local organizations to advocate for, promote, and inform its patrons of all the library has to offer, and accurately reflect its successes of the past 125 years.

June 2022, the library's staff partnered with the city's historian, Dr. Larry Spruill. Great strides have been made in updating the inventory of our relics and historical collections. By about 2025, the library will have successfully retired all antiquated systems, with the goal of streamlining into digitalized, modern technology. Our collections, and reference items will be compartmentalized and refined, with great emphasis on storage, climate, and esthetics of the local history room and surrounding spaces. This will be accomplished under the direction of a full-time archivist, assisted by our long-serving staff and librarians.

The Library enhances its extensive collections via routine purchasing of African American, and Hispanic American titles. The intention is to attain the most diverse and equitable of such collections in Westchester County. This endeavor is paired with ongoing display exhibitions of the same, and creation of annually updated brochures.

LIBRARY-AT-A-GLANCE

The Mount Vernon Public Library houses a special Hip Hop Collection that honors the life and legacy of Dwight Myers, Jamaican-born American rapper, music executive, producer, and actor that was known to the world by his stage name, Heavy D. The Heavy D Collection consists of books, DVDs, and autobiographical content. By 2025, the library plans to expand on the collection, and add others that will reflect the past and present existence of Mount Vernon's vast array of notable citizens.

PROGRAMS

Currently, the library is embarking on the revitalization of its literacy program by implementing weekly ESL, citizenship classes, and bilingual storytime for children. By September of 2022, the library intends to hire a computer lab instructor to teach fundamentals of the internet, basic computers, word processing, and spreadsheet training. The designated spaces for such training are the existing computer lab and Grace Greene Baker Community Room. Currently, the library hosts digital literacy classes several days a week, and has routinely done so for five years.

The library's popular crochet group has met weekly for the past six years and hosts a monthly book club that is also well attended. The garden club has been meeting for the last four years on a monthly basis with regular attendance. Guided by librarian Deborah Nelson, patrons enjoy special projects like creating terrariums. We pair our programs with our collections, and invest in those successes by maintaining up to date materials.

LIBRARY-AT-A-GLANCE

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Among others, the library maintains a successful partnership with Feeding Westchester and, as of May 2022, has fed well over 3000 Mount Vernon families with an expectation of feeding over 8000 by September. Thanks to New York State, Westchester County, and local funding, the library routinely donates free breakfast and lunch throughout the summer months.

These have been ongoing programs supported by the community for many years.

The library has an extended relationship with our senior citizen population and intends to make even greater strides by October 2022, by investing in transportation for our less mobile and disabled patrons. Along with the weekly crochet groups, garden club gatherings, and newly explored interests, it is recognized that seniors “Stay current” by engaging in the pastimes of journaling, gaming, and keeping up with the latest in technology, to name a few.

LIBRARY-AT-A-GLANCE

INFRASTRUCTURE

The replacement of over 60 antiquated windows was only the beginning. The next phase of the library's highly anticipated transformation will result in modern upgrades to flooring, shelving, furniture, lighting, and underused spaces. Natural indoor and outdoor lighting improvements have already been implemented into the design, as is necessary to make the library a more amenable space. Updates to the interior and exterior infrastructure are current and ongoing.

"The children's library is where lifelong patrons are born", and by spring of 2023, the library hopes to break ground for the renovation of its children's library. The goal is to create an idyllic atmosphere that will inspire civility, intellect, and creativity.

There will be defined spaces for homework assistance and after-school programming based on early literacy, STEAM-inspired toys and activities. The library will invest in expanding its base of storytime, and musictime performance vendors.

The library's outdoor spaces have great potential. In the fall of 2022, the library will embark on a plan to elevate the landscape of our gardens, by evoking esthetics comparable to The Ramble in Central Park. The goal is to create an atmosphere that will serve as the perfect backdrop for hosting indoor-outdoor community programs and events.

LIBRARY-AT-A-GLANCE

By March of 2023, the library hopes to embark on the creation of a well-defined theme space that will appeal to our teen patrons and students. This will include a special computer section that will allow for computer classes and programming, paired with modern materials, films, books, and periodicals.

Historically, the Mount Vernon community has greatly contributed to the popularity and success of HBCUs, (Historically Black Colleges and Universities). The thread of HBCUs, paired with an ode to Divine Nine Fraternities and Sororities, will take center stage in this long-anticipated endeavor.

By the spring of 2024, the library hopes to have revamped its historical Mills Law Library, thereby creating an atmosphere that is spacious and welcoming to aspiring legal professionals. The intent is to expand and renovate for the purpose of accommodating the law library's dense use and historical collection. At least one space will be renovated for the purpose of an annually donated office for first year law school graduates. Our Westlaw database will be streamlined for ease of use, and we are seeking funding to assist with costs associated with LexisNexis Software.

LIBRARY-AT-A-GLANCE

ANNUAL EVENTS

Mental Health Awareness Month is observed during the month of May. This year, 2022, the library partnered with Licensed Clinical Social Worker, and former City Councilwoman Delia Farquharson. The library recognizes the need to provide ongoing information for emotional health and wellness services, and is committed to exploring solutions to community wellness.

This program has been successful for over five years; An annual film screening, paired with a display of current books dedicated to psychology, are always a huge part of the presentation.

May 21, 2022, the library hosted its first Annual Women of Distinction Awards Presentation, which included a photographic portrait exhibit of over a dozen entrepreneurs, professionals, educators, and leaders from the Mount Vernon community. The event was standing room only, and within seventy-two hours was streamed to an online audience of nearly two thousand. By September of 2022, the library intends to partner with the Westchester Library System (WLS) to launch streamed media channels via Youtube, ROKU, and other digital platforms.

August 7, 2022, back by popular demand, the library will host its Annual Comic Expo, at which time the staff also promotes graphic works and novels, carefully selected according to teen, children, senior, and adult interests. Our graphic novels are currently housed and merchandised in the library's adult section, and we plan to expand on this popular collection.

Sunday, August 21, 2022, marks National Senior Citizens Day. The library will celebrate by partnering with organizations and communities throughout Westchester County.

LIBRARY-AT-A-GLANCE

August 25, 2022, the library's garden club will host its first Annual Rose and Garden Festival. This year's festival will honor the lives of 13-year-old Shamoya McKenzie, 34-year-old Glynis Pinto, and 16-year-old Kayla Green, three innocent victims of the Mount Vernon community, tragically cut down by gang-related violence. The festival will feature a competition highlighting the gardens of citizens and patrons, while educating in the cultivation of roses and horticulture.

The indoor-outdoor program will begin with a dance opening performed by The Mount Vernon High School "Knightettes" Cheerleading Team.

October 2020, the library's garden club hosted its first Annual Harvest Time Celebration. It was an opportunity to educate our patrons about the history of harvest time, and the role it continues to play in American Civilization. The garden club also honored about a dozen community stakeholders and staff, that have generously volunteered their services and monetary donations toward the maintenance of our library's historical gardens.

In 2018, the library hosted its first Annual Golf Outing Fundraiser, it was a huge success in reigniting public interest for the library and all it has to offer. Due to prior pandemic restrictions, the library plans to revisit the Annual Golf Outing by on or about the spring of 2023.

On July 11, 2023, the children's library will partner with the Mount Vernon City School District to host its "First ever" E.B. White Day Parade and Celebration, so save the date!

COMMUNITY SURVEY

In spite of the pandemic, The Mount Vernon Public Library adapted a comprehensive study for the purpose of redefining its services to the city's community:

what library services are vital to residents and what role should the library play?

How does the library provide access to content, information, and entertainment, whilst maintaining relevancy amidst ever-evolving technology?

The study consisted of an assessment of needs based on inquiries about the community's perception of the library:

How can the library prove more useful and how can services be improved?

Mount Vernon residents shared their ideas via print survey and offered suggestions by participating in one of several group discussions that included library staff, community residents, and parents of small children.

These ongoing communications resulted in valuable suggestions for the library's future direction. Dialogue was solicited with non-users of the library as well, thereby further assessing both positive and negative issues impacting our services, and public expectation for the the library's future.

In conclusion, our community stakeholders and patrons desire conditions that will refine ease of use, and access to the resources their monetary contributions support.

OBJECTIVES OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

The strategic plan fulfills a registration requirement for libraries chartered by The New York State Education Department (NYSED) to ensure eligibility for federal grants, state grants, and funding.

Strategic planning dually serves as a long-range guide, aiding the library's board of trustees in the collective role of governance and fiduciary duties of "Care, loyalty, and obedience." Purposed goals are essential, thereby promoting confidence in the governing decisions that will impact our library's budget and services for future use.

Ultimately, the library's intention while embarking on this process, was to create a transformative, written plan of service, designed to elevate the quality of our patron's lives as they pursue intellectual success.

METRICS

Facility

Expand library hours to include Sundays throughout the year, FY22

Elevate the use of our historical mezzanine and rotunda spaces by expanding the frequency of exhibits, programs, and events in said areas, FY22

Invest in real property to expand the library's presence throughout the community by creating kiosk sites and extension branches, FY25

Expand community outreach by utilizing existing mail services, and providing routine email updates

Partner with the city, surrounding businesses and stakeholders, to expand parking options for our patrons, FY23

Finance

Incorporate digital record keeping and tracking systems for purchase orders and invoices, FY23

Retain the library's 501 (c) 3 "not-for-profit" status; contemporaneously create a grants committee for oversight of the same, FY23

Prioritize and maintain timeliness in the processing of outgoing and incoming financial items, FY22

METRICS

Governance

Encourage routine training standards for trustees, FY22

Mandate a formal course in fiduciary obligations to be completed by newly elected, and or appointed trustees, FY23

Review, amend, and implement the annual evaluation process for the executive library director, FY22

Provide routine oversight for the library's finances, FY22

Marketing and Public Relations

Create and routinely distribute a monthly e-newsletter with calendar of programs and events, invest in banners and signage, FY23

Create a website that is optically appealing and simplistic in terms of use, but nearly as engaging as an actual library visit, FY23

Invest in the creation of an alternate website for our disabled patrons, invest in transportation and the expansion of facility access for disabled patrons, FY23

Maintain a workplace that encourages the highest standard of customer care by bolstering staff morale, FY22

METRICS

Measurement and Evaluation

Pursue the development of compelling and transformative programs based on current community trends, statistics, data, and surveys, FY24

Routinely update, refer to, and evaluate the organizational and, or flow chart(s)

Expand the frequency of readings, book signings, film screenings, and community discussions; elevate the presentation and marketing of digital program and event streaming, FY24

Encourage an increase in visual and performing arts programming, FY23

Curate unique collections that embody the spirit of our diverse, Mount Vernon, New York community, FY25

PARTNERSHIPS

The library will partner with The Mount Vernon City School District to host its first Annual E.B. White Day Parade Celebration, and first Annual Rose and Garden Festival, FY22-FY23

The library intends to partner with WLS to launch digital streaming channels via YouTube, ROKU, and other digital platforms, FY23

The library will routinely partner with established literary societies to encourage entry into poetry and writing competitions, FY22

The library will continue its successful partnerships with Feeding Westchester, ArtsWestchester, United Way of Westchester and Putnam, American Red Cross, and the Mount Vernon Youth Bureau, to name a few, FY22

The library is partnering with The City of Mount Vernon for Mayor Shawyne Patterson-Howard's "Level Up", a guaranteed monthly income program for 200 families

June 2022, the library partnered with the City of Mount Vernon to celebrate Juneteenth, and Pride Month, respectively

The library will maintain, and strengthen its special relationships with state, county, local government agencies and organizations, local businesses and corporations

PERSONNEL

Hire a full time archivist/curator that will catalog, maintain, and oversee preservation and exhibition of our historical relics and collections; Invest in the security of our valuable content, FY23

Appoint a treasurer that will prioritize the streamlining of our library's finances, FY22

Develop a modern technology team; hire a librarian that specializes in technology, FY23

Routinely and ceremoniously observe National Employee Appreciation Day, FY23

Replace employee gaps caused via retirement, resignation, termination, injury and, or illness in a timely manner to maintain smooth operation, FY22

Fulfill the New York State requirement to assign a librarian for ESL, citizenship, and literacy, FY22

Designate a teen librarian, and simultaneously increase part time staff hires, FY23

Designate a librarian for the library's Job Information Center, FY22



POLICY

Adopt a labor-management handbook for employees, FY23

Create a policy handbook that will be readily shared with patrons, FY22

Maintain by-laws that reflect board values, and ethical standards of governance

Routinely review and update policies that are current and compliant with law

Prioritize and maintain compliance with New York State Education Department

Routinely reiterate The Mount Vernon Public Library's mission and vision



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Strategic Planning Committee

Timur Davis, Library Director

Nishan Stepak, Librarian

James Finch, Consultant

Hope Marable, Chair

Special thanks to

Mount Vernon Public Library Staff

Friends of Mount Vernon Public Library

Tamara Stewart, Assistant Library Director

Trustee Julie Mills-Worthy, Westchester Library System

Dr. Terry Kirchner, Executive Director of Westchester Library System

Stakeholder Interview Participants, Survey Participants, Patrons

Chris McDonough, Advocate, Community Stakeholder

Councilwoman Cathlin Gleason, Mount Vernon, New York

Jesse Van Lew, Advocate, Community Stakeholder

Geoff Munroe, Advocate, Community Stakeholder

Mount Vernon Public Library Board of Trustees

MVPL MEASURE OF IMPACT

As of 2022, The Mount Vernon Public Library's website has been visited over 200 times daily.

In 2021, MVPL serviced 19,179 interlibrary loans (ILL), in contrast to a total of 2,031 received from other libraries. A brief outline of additional data from 2021 is shared below:

MVPL has performed 10,647 reference and circulation assists, and reports usage of the digital database OverDrive at 9,963, with Hoopla Digital at 3,002. MVPL loaned laptops and HP Chromebooks to 45 patrons, along with 27 Wifi Hotspots. 110 MVPL Library Cards were distributed online via the library's website, and our event programs are attended by an average of 300 visitors a month.

MVPL added 4,699 items to its collection, along with 377 new library patrons. 206 library cards were acquired by adults, 59 by teens, and 157 library cards were "ceremoniously awarded" at The MPVL Children's Library, "Where lifelong patrons are born".

*"A library outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people.
It is a never failing spring in the desert"*

Andrew Carnegie