

# Santa Monica Public Library

## Strategic Plan

Santa Monica Public Library is a community, cultural and learning hub. Its mission is to provide resources, services and a place to read, connect, relax and learn. The Library supports literacy, life-long learning, civic engagement, and cultural awareness.

Four strategic focus areas were distilled from community and staff feedback, best practice, emerging trend information and City data. Over the next three years, the Library will embrace these themes to accomplish goals through the lens of strategic planning.

### **Vibrant Learning Center**

1. Expand the Library's role in supporting early literacy
2. Support young adults completing their high school education
3. Create a learning program to support adult and intergenerational literacy

### **Wellbeing Cultivator**

1. Create and maintain connections that build community wellbeing
2. Develop a tool to assess wellbeing aspects of Library programs and services
3. Co-host a Wellbeing Summit in collaboration with other agencies

### **Dynamic Third Place**

1. Make recommendations to improve the customer experience in the Library
2. Upgrade the Library's connectivity to increase utility of customers' personal electronic devices in the Library
3. Improve technology and audiovisual equipment in Library public meeting spaces

### **Community & Cultural Connector**

1. Work with Innovation Technology Task Force to design and plan collaborative working, technology and creation spaces
2. Collect data to learn about the needs of job seekers and career changers; use the data to design programs
3. Meet with agencies to explore options for providing services that address homelessness issues in the Library

# SMPL as Vibrant Learning Center

From storytime to digital media space, the Library provides inspiring learning opportunities grounded in best practices and equipped with the latest tools and technology to help community members flourish in today's knowledge economy.

The Library is the hub of a culturally connected community. It bridges generations and digital divides while linking diverse languages of learning, from text to code. The Library provides a wide array of programs, classes and services that offer access and embraces Santa Monica's commitment to lifelong learning.

The Library offers the latest tools and technology to support learning for school, career and life success. SMPL also maintains the quality of core services such as research support, local history resources, and a commitment to building a community of readers.

## In the spotlight: Summer Reading Soars

During fiscal year 2014-15 the Library broke its summer reading records. This included a 20% increase in summer reading registrations, a total of 2.1 million minutes read and 389 youth programs with 15,320 in program attendance during a 10-week period.

## SMPL as Vibrant Learning Center Launch Goals<sup>1</sup>

- |   |
|---|
| 1) Expand the Library's role in supporting early literacy education with "Reading-2-Go," a Library State Technology Act (LSTA) grant-funded program. This program targets early childcare providers and their students in: English, Spanish and Amharic. Pilot to run through June 2016.  |
| 2) Provide support to young adults at Olympic High School who are finishing high school or preparing for their GED exam. This is a LSTA grant-funded program called "Second Chances" to be piloted through June 2016.   |
| 3) Create a learning program to support adult and intergenerational literacy, skill-building, and career development opportunities by June 2017. Planning for a basic adult literacy component, based on national literacy models, is supported by an Institute for Museum and Library Services grant administered by the American Library Association. |

---

<sup>1</sup> These are initial goals: new and updated goal and objectives will appear in the Library's annual workplans. As in all strategic planning processes, these will change over time.

# SMPL as Wellbeing Cultivator

The Library helps residents to **live their best lives.**

The Library has played a vital role in enhancing the welfare of the community since its founding in 1890. Many core Library services and new opportunities exist to nurture wellbeing in Santa Monica. The City of Santa Monica received a Bloomberg Philanthropies grant to assess the state of wellbeing for the City's residents and examine options to improve their lives. The result is the Wellbeing Project and Index. Data from the Index -- particularly about social cohesion, learning and place -- will drive the Library's community engagement and program design.

## In the spotlight: Wellbeing Discovery Hall

A summer 2015 series of Learn Do Share activities included the theme of wellbeing with a discovery lab and pop-ups that focused on group learning and design. These experiences were creatively explored ways that the Pico Branch at Virginia Avenue Park can actively support wellbeing in the Pico neighborhood, including in the areas of education and careers.

Under this strategic area the Library is committed to supporting Santa Monica as a learning community; providing tools and experiences that stimulate intellectual exploration, emotional development and relationship building; and creating inventive ways for people and groups to make meaningful connections with one another.

## SMPL as Wellbeing Cultivator Launch Goals

- |  |
|--|
| 1) Create ways to incorporate social interaction and build community connections across a selection of Library programs by December 2016.  |
| 2) Create a tool to assess the contributions to wellbeing across a range of Library programs. As this data set grows, use it to guide future development of programming. Complete initial design process by June 2016.                 |
| 3) Co-host a summit to advise on the Library's Wellbeing objectives and measurements by March 2017. As a lead-in, create three pop-up wellness information centers through partnerships with other city departments and organizations. |

# SMPL as Dynamic Third Place

Flexible, creative and intentional **Library spaces** attract users to experience the Library as a third place with a wide range of collections, services, programs and amenities.

Santa Monica Public Library provides comfortable, engaging and beautiful spaces for people to read, relax, discover, learn, and participate in social and civic discourse. The Library acts as an anchor in the community, a third place<sup>2</sup> separate from home and work.

The Library team is adapting spaces, technology and services to be flexible and responsive to new trends and community needs. Library staff and resources are extending beyond the walls of the Library facilities to meet people where they are. Community festivals, increased usage of mobile technology, pop-ups and outreach services are each playing a part.

The Library is building a sense of discovery through place. Thoughtful arrangements of collections, merchandising space, and design elements are creating an enviable user experience. Ultimately, the Library, whether physical, digital or out in the community, is fueling learning, wellbeing and social connection.

## In the spotlight: SMPL at the Beach

During summer 2015, the Library collaborated with the Department of Community & Cultural Services to produce a series of pop-up libraries on the beach with the theme “Less shhh... more surf.” This included seaside story times, beach reads book discussions, marine life presentations, and hula hooping. Hundreds of beach visitors participated.

## SMPL as Dynamic Third Place Launch Goals

- |   |
|---|
| 1) Examine and make recommendations to improve customer movement, flow and discovery throughout Library buildings and to optimize space usage by December 2016.               |
| 2) Working with other City departments, upgrade the Library’s broadband connectivity to support co-working and technology/creation spaces and learning programs by June 2016. |
| 3) Upgrade tools and technology in Multipurpose Room by August 2016.  |

# SMPL as Community & Cultural Connector

---

<sup>2</sup> Ray Oldenburg defined the third place (or third space) as the informal public gathering space where people can come together on neutral ground separate from of home ("first place") and the workplace ("second place"). The third place is critical for a well-functioning democracy.

## The Library forms **community partnerships** and alliances to bolster **collective impact**, build community assets and inspire positive social change.

*No single organization is responsible for any major social problem, nor can any single organization cure it. –John Kania & Mark Kramer, Stanford Social Innovation Review*

Collective impact uses a deliberate, collaborative process to build community assets and address social change.<sup>3</sup> Successful collective impact results from a shared agenda, vision and measurements; mutually reinforcing activities; continuous communication; and a steering team dedicated to achieving shared purpose and vision.<sup>4</sup>

Library staff members are committed to building community assets and empowering residents by creating rich, meaningful relationships with community partners. The Library team continues to forge alliances and collaborate with community experts to enhance programs and services. Together, our collective efforts and services will provide the resources necessary for community members to thrive from birth and to succeed throughout life.

### In the spotlight: Innovation Technology Task Force

A dynamic group of entrepreneurs, technology professionals, innovators, educators, funders and parents convened four times April-June 2015 to advise on the role of technology in 21<sup>st</sup> century Library services and to provide strategic planning recommendations. The Task Force's insight has been a critical component in the strategic planning process and all who participated formed new working relationships and partnership possibilities.

## SMPL as Community & Cultural Connector Launch Goals

- |   |
|---|
| 1) Partner with the Innovation Technology Task Force to plan and prototype collaborative workspace, technology and creation spaces that create opportunities for career and business networking and increase the technical literacy of Library users by June 2017.    |
| 2) Gather data through a survey or focus groups to discover what skills and literacies Library users, job seekers and career 'pivoters' would like to learn and in what way by December 2016. Use data to identify potential partners, collaborators, and recipients. |
| 3) Evaluate support to homeless and work with agencies serving the homeless to explore providing services or connections to resources such as job skills training and education support by June 2016.   |

<sup>3</sup> In 2011, John Kania & Mark Kramer defined collective impact as the idea that "large-scale social change comes from better cross-sector coordination rather than from isolated intervention of individual organizations."

[http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective\\_impact](http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact)

<sup>4</sup> <http://collectiveimpactforum.org/what-collective-impact>