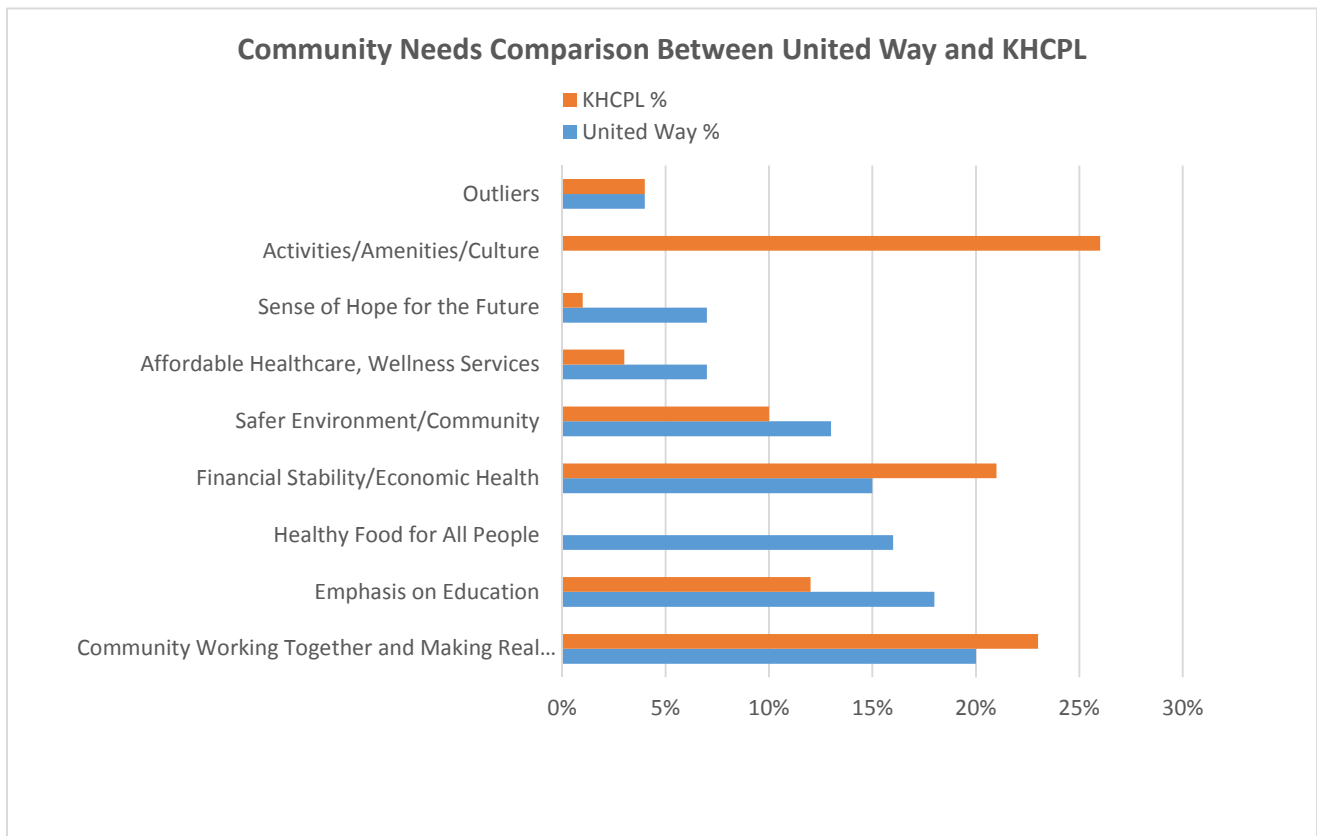


# Kokomo-Howard County Public Library Strategic Plan, 2016-2019

## A: Community Needs and Goals

a: Because the library belongs to the community, we chose to use a range of tools to gather information from and about it. United Way of Howard County surveyed over 300 residents using Harwood methodology to identify and categorize their aspirations; those results were a foundational piece of our analysis. We collected an additional 70 aspirations from employees and trustees and categorized their results separately. Secondly, we reviewed a financial status report produced by the Indiana Association of United Ways which included information specific to Howard County. Thirdly, we met with small groups of community members and library staff, each of which developed ideas based on the results of our community's aspirations.

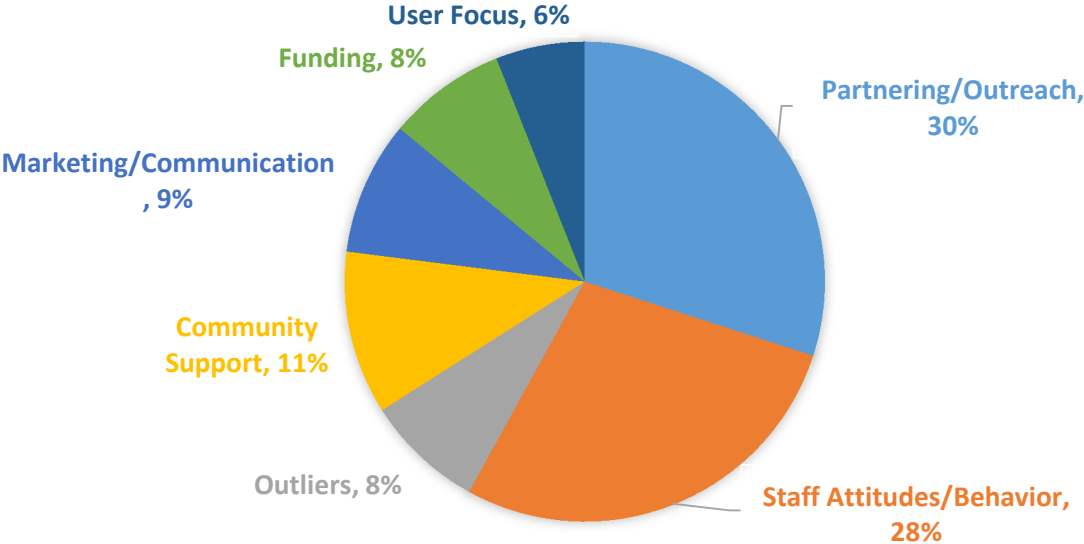
While there was much similarity between the two sets of aspirations, there were also two key differences. When asked by the library, more than 25% of the responses fell into the category of cultural and societal amenities, a category not indicated by United Way results. In addition, roughly 16% of United Way respondents wished for healthy food for all people, a category entirely absent in library respondents. This difference could indicate that people's thought processes are influenced by the context in which the question is asked, an interesting issue for libraries to consider.



From the categorized results, we selected a modified version of six areas, eliminating food security and community safety as being outside the library’s scope, and dividing amenities and culture into two separate aspirations. Each group of community members or employees were assigned one of the remaining aspirational areas and led through an exercise that tied the aspiration to the expected role the library plays in the community. The exercise encouraged each group to describe the library’s role, to provide general interpretations of that role, to develop some details of that definition, and to suggest a strategy/next steps to make the library successful in that role.

One of the questions asked of each group was what underlying conditions needed to be present for it to be possible for the library to fulfill the role they envisioned for it. Those conditions, along with the frequency with which they were mentioned, are shown below.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING: UNDERLYING CONDITIONS NEEDED FOR SUCCESS**



As groups proceeded through the exercise some groups followed the format as requested, while others continued to provide a number of ideas without narrowing or developing them. In alignment with the conditions noted in the chart above, many participants suggested specific ideas that involved partnering or collaboration. There were also a number of comments related to better serving teens and to developing our employees and their outlook.

To supplement the aspiration material that was gathered and explored, we also reviewed the results of a study conducted by the Indiana Association of United Ways. The ALICE Study of Financial Hardship, released in the fall of 2014, produced detailed economic information specific to each county in Indiana. Because of the known limitations of federal poverty guidelines, the study looked at actual costs of living in each county and developed a household survival budget. The report introduces the

term ALICE, Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, and found that far more Indiana residents are struggling to afford basic necessities than previously thought.

A major takeaway is that current jobs in Indiana have moved away from higher paying manufacturing and construction toward jobs in the service sector that do not pay sustainable wages. In addition, future job growth is projected to be primarily in the service sector, as well. The current assessment of Howard County job opportunities is only fair, and 42% of Howard County residents live below the threshold for financial stability. This snapshot of our community's financial status correlates well with the significant number of aspiration respondents who chose financial stability or economic health as their largest wish for our community.

**b:** The aspirations expressed, along with themes emerging from group discussions, follow:

- Strong and continual learning, both formal and informal
- Additional cultural opportunities
- Economic health for businesses, families, and individuals
- Local amenities of all sorts, ranging from athletic facilities to improved technology, a teen hang-out space, and more dining options
- Physically healthy residents who have access to top-notch healthcare
- A unified populace with positive attitudes and perceptions and a willingness to cooperate

Regardless of the aspirational area, collaboration was the most common theme that arose as a strategy for success. There was also a large emphasis on the key role played by staff and the importance of their attitudes and behavior as the “face” of the library.

One thing is clear: the community members and employees we spoke with have high aspirations for our community and even higher expectations for the role the library can play.

## **B: Service Responses to the Community**

**a:** In preparation for setting goals, outcomes, and actions, the library leadership team read The Advantage by Patrick Lencioni. To create greater clarity for our organization, we answered Lencioni's “critical questions”. These included “Why do we exist?” and “How do we behave?” The latter resulted in a list of three existing core values. We also addressed, “How will we succeed?” which led us to develop three strategies to take us into the future. The methodology of selecting strategies, based on highly successful consultant and author Lencioni's model, led us to utilize those strategies as our service responses. The goals, outcomes (comparable to objectives), and actions (comparable to activities) align with our strategies.

Our strategies (service responses) for the next four years are as follows:

- 1) We enrich patrons' lives through diverse materials, convenient services, and quality programs and events.
- 2) We build community-wide loyalty and aspire to become a local destination.
- 3) We employ and develop people who are invested in providing positive patron experiences.

**b:** After agreeing on clear answers to these questions, with the approval of the Library Board, the leadership team also chose a vision statement, created a new mission statement, and selected a new tagline. The table below compares old and new statements.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Former</b>	<b>New</b>
Vision Statement	none	<b>The library is a vital component in an engaged and thriving community.</b>
Mission Statement	<i>The mission of the Kokomo-Howard County Public Library is to provide dynamic services that encourage the pursuit of education, information, research, and recreation in an inviting and safe environment.</i>	<b>We create opportunities for our community to become its best.</b>
Tagline	<i>More Than Just Books</i>	<b>Explore Your Opportunities</b>

**c:** Our strategies (service responses) and corresponding goals follow:

*We enrich patrons’ lives through diverse materials, convenient services, and quality programs and events*

**Goal:** Expand our active user base

**Goal:** Create a renewed emphasis on our role as an educational partner in the community

*We build community-wide loyalty and aspire to become a local destination*

**Goal:** Play a positive role in our community’s economic vitality

**Goal:** Focus on improved services to teens

**Goal:** Develop our green spaces as community destinations

*We employ and develop people who are invested in providing positive patron experiences*

**Goal:** Become a healthier and more cohesive organization

**Goal:** Align our hiring and training with the library’s vision, mission, and values

**d:** Completed Goals, Outcomes (comparable to objectives), and Actions (comparable to activities) follow.

**Strategy One**

*We enrich patrons’ lives through diverse materials, convenient services, and quality programs and events*

**Goal:** Expand our active user base

Desired Outcome: Increase by 8% the number of cardholders who use their card at least once during a twelve month period

Action: Begin communication campaigns targeted at new and inactive users

Action: Partner with one or more local organizations to cross-promote activities

Action: Target one or more specific audiences for increased services

Action: Assess the need for and feasibility of expanded or modified library hours

Desired Outcome: Develop three or more ways to communicate the value of the library

Action: Create and promote Return on Investment publicity

Action: Create a Did You Know publicity series

Action: Research a large-scale publicity campaign for the library

Action: Begin a systematic effort to tie one or more social media posts per week to current popular culture

Action: Educate staff in their role regarding word-of-mouth publicity

Action: Assess sources for and costs of creating video-based publicity

Desired Outcome: Offer new benefits to card-holders and/or library users

Action: Launch circulating Wi-Fi hotspots

Action: Explore options for a library-based bike-share program

Action: Investigate the feasibility of circulating video games

Action: Implement the My Library Rewards program

Action: Increase the number of programs offered per year to the exceptional level as defined by State Standards

Action: Update the library's main website, creating more intuitive use

Action: Create items and hold events that raise awareness of Indiana's Bicentennial

Action: Initiate services aimed at helping readers find reading material more easily

Desired Outcome: Invite community members and organizations to become directly involved with us

Action: Work jointly with volunteers and community partners to plan and present activities to support the Discover Tech exhibit

Action: Develop two or more annual community-driven events that raise awareness or cultivate unity

Action: Convene at least one local, intergovernmental meeting or joint educational session

**Goal:** Create a renewed emphasis on our role as an educational partner in the community

Desired Outcome: Identify and institute three or more educational initiatives targeting preschool through high school students

Action: Begin community collaborations to incentivize students to enroll in and complete the Summer Reading Program

Action: Expand visits to early childhood centers, providing literature-based programming

Action: Establish an Outcome Based Program Planning methodology for select preschool story times

Action: Launch e-access library cards for students in select schools and/or grades

Desired Outcome: Build new collaborations with one or more local colleges or universities

Action: Serve as a site for one or more local paid or unpaid intern(s)

Action: Establish an opportunity for college students with technology skills to interact with younger students

Action: Partner with instructors and/or students for programs that support the Explore Tech exhibit

Desired Outcome: Assess community need for skills-based databases

Action: Develop a survey mechanism to gather community input

Action: Assess usage of current databases

Action: Shift expenditures so as to add appropriate skills-based databases

Desired Outcome: Identify and utilize strategies to raise awareness of specific skills

Action: Revise and reinstate ConverStations

Action: Build a partnership that results in a new skill-building event

Action: Use our teleconferencing equipment to offer a skills-based learning opportunity

Action: Partner with other organizations to cross-promote skill-building databases and/or events

Action: Incorporate age-appropriate career and related skill information in select programming for school-aged children and teens

## **Strategy Two**

*We build community-wide loyalty and aspire to become a local destination*

**Goal:** Play a positive role in our community's economic vitality

Desired Outcome: Expand the numbers and types of technology-focused learning opportunities we offer

Action: Investigate technology training options and costs

Action: Host a special emphasis event/series on coding

Action: Offer special events to coincide with the Discover Tech exhibit

Desired Outcome: Offer at least one new form of education and/or support to local businesses/employers

Action: Work with the Chamber of Commerce to offer one or more educational opportunities for business people

Action: Explore the "Leaving Fort Ref" model of embedding library staff in the community

Action: Devise one or more ways to help young, working adults in our community connect with each other and with the community

Desired Outcome: Offer new forms of education and/or support to local individuals, including job-seekers

Action: Offer financial education opportunities

Action: Launch a website for job-seekers

Action: Hold one or more event(s) to showcase higher-wage jobs

**Goal:** Focus on improved services to teens

Desired Outcome: Increase the number of formal opportunities for teens to have positive experiences with the library

Action: Partner with one or more schools on a Human Book project

Action: Work with one or more partner organizations to create and maintain a formal teen advisory group

Action: Offer one or more large-group teen events per year

Action: Offer one or more after-school program series for teens

Desired Outcome: Make two or more changes that align our teen services more closely with teen development

Action: Assess our KHCPL Main teen space for suitability and usage  
Action: Provide training for our staff on teen development and/or best practices in interacting with teens  
Action: Assess our staffing model regarding teen services

Desired Outcome: Create a plan for a seamless transition between Children's and Teen Services

Action: Offer joint programs/events for tweens and young teens  
Action: Hold an Open House for incoming sixth graders  
Action: Research best practices for retaining library users as they transition to middle school

**Goal:** Develop our green spaces as community destinations

Desired Outcome: Find immediate, affordable ways to increase the number of outdoor activities we offer

Action: Seek a partner to begin and run a community garden at KHCPL Russiaville  
Action: Investigate the possibility of a walking club and/or walking book club  
Action: Offer tactile, outdoor children's play/exploration options at one or more branches

Desired Outcome: Make progress toward long-term options to offer increased outdoor learning or activity

Action: Research opportunities for outdoor learning and connecting  
Action: Create cost projections for select options  
Action: Seek supplemental funding for one or more outdoor installations

### **Strategy Three**

*We employ and develop people who are invested in providing positive patron experiences*

**Goal:** Become a healthier and more cohesive organization

Desired Outcome: Introduce new ways to utilize employee expertise

Action: Formally survey staff on their skills and interests  
Action: Institute additional peer training  
Action: Produce a series of Staff Video Updates that feature employees' expertise

Desired Outcome: Make two or more changes that promote collaboration across departments and/or locations

Action: Increase understanding across our organization by providing cross-training for employees  
Action: Establish a library-wide program planning committee  
Action: Institute new cross-generational programs that incorporate employees from more than one department

**Goal:** Align our hiring and training with the library's vision, mission, and values

Desired Outcome: Review hiring and on-boarding processes

Action: Create a missional component for all job ads and interviews  
Action: Increase the frequency of new employee orientation  
Action: Create written departmental training procedures for new hires

Desired Outcome: Review training and ongoing assessment processes

Action: Revise performance appraisal forms and procedures

Action: Revise job descriptions to reflect the library’s vision, mission, and values

Action: Institute formal supervisor training

Action: Assess the need for a formal competency program

Action: Hold or attend training on change management

**e: Communication Plan**

- We plan to continue the success we’ve had with our current marketing mix: radio remotes, radio ads, newspaper articles, social media posts, in-house promotions (TVs, posters, bookmarks), quarterly newsletter, e-newsletter, press releases, and some print ads.
- We also plan to supplement our current approach with additional actions that support the goals and outcomes we are striving to achieve. Those are summarized below:
  - Train staff to be library marketing ambassadors in the community to establish more word-of-mouth promotion
  - Ask community partners to use their distribution channels for appropriate publicity
  - Explore development of large-scale marketing campaigns geared to new and inactive users and a community-wide effort to communicate the value of the library
  - Create return-on-investment publicity and did-you-know publicity
  - Assess sources for and costs of creating more videos for marketing purposes
  - Consider adding e-newsletters geared toward specific service users, such as tips and programming for parents, information geared toward social service providers, etc.
  - Create a specific and comprehensive Communication Plan for Discover Tech: Engineers Make a World of Difference exhibition

**C: Assessment of Facilities, Services, Technology, and Operations**

Area	Currently Have/Need	Required by Standards	Identified by Community Need	Standards Compliance Level
Facilities	Add handicap buttons to first floor restrooms at KHCPL Main			Enhance the way in which we meet ADA requirements
Facilities	Replace the HVAC system at Russiaville			
Facilities	Assess Main’s teen space for suitability and usage	Space designated for young adult services		Improve
Facilities			Offer tactile, outdoor children’s play/exploration options at one or more branches	
Facilities	Install LED exterior can lights at South to			



	increase efficiency and reduce staff time			
<b>Facilities</b>	Install LED acorn top lights at Main to increase efficiency and reduce staff time			
<b>Facilities</b>	Install LED T12 fixtures at South to increase efficiency and reduce staff time			
<b>Facilities</b>	Install LED can lights in Russiaville barrel ceiling to increase efficiency and reduce staff time			
<b>Facilities</b>	Replace roof at South. Installed in 2001. Could need replacement as early as 2019.			
<b>Services</b>			Initiate services aimed at helping readers find reading material more easily	
<b>Services</b>		Increase the number of programs offered per year		Exceptional
<b>Services</b>			Explore options for a library-based bike-share program	
<b>Technology</b>			Launch a website for job-seekers	
<b>Technology</b>			Update the library's main website, creating more intuitive use	
<b>Technology</b>			Launch circulating wi-fi hotspots	
<b>Technology</b>			Implement the My Library Rewards program	
<b>Operations</b>			Assess the need for and feasibility of	

			expanded or modified library hours	
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**D: Ongoing Evaluation Process**

The library’s executive leadership team will be using this plan to guide our work over the next year. At regular meetings, we will use the answers we created to the questions in The Advantage, as well as the section of the Strategic Plan that is currently our focus, to plan our next steps on a biweekly basis.

We will review the goals, outcomes, and actions each year in November. At that time, we will also revise the upcoming section of the plan as needed and take that to the Board for approval.

**E: Financial Resources and Sustainability**

Area	Project	Operating	LIRF	Rainy Day	Other
Facilities	Add handicap buttons to first floor restrooms at KHCPL Main	\$3,500.00			
Facilities	Replace the HVAC system at KHCPL Russiaville	Estimated \$15,000.00			
Facilities	Assess our KHCPL Main teen space for suitability and usage	Assessment: staff time only	If changes are needed		
Facilities	Offer tactile, outdoor children’s play/exploration options at one or more branches	Combine with other funds			Grant funds; gift funds
Facilities	Install LED exterior can lights at South	\$3,000			
Facilities	Install LED acorn top lights at Main	\$2,000			
Facilities	Install LED T12 fixtures at South	\$2,000			
Facilities	Install LED can lights in Russiaville barrel ceiling	\$3,000			
Facilities	Replace roof at South		\$40,000		
Services	Initiate services aimed at helping readers find reading material more easily	Existing personnel transfer/change			
Services	Increase the number of programs offered per year	Existing personnel transfer/change			
Services	Explore options for a library-based bike-share program	Combine with other funds			Grant funds; gift funds

<b>Technology</b>	Launch a website for job-seekers	Unpaid intern/existing personnel			
<b>Technology</b>	Update the library's main website, creating more intuitive use	Existing personnel			
<b>Technology</b>	Launch circulating wi-fi hotspots	Combine with other funds			Grant funds; gift funds
<b>Technology</b>	Implement the My Library Rewards program				Funded by vendors
<b>Operations</b>	Assess the need for and feasibility of expanded or modified library hours	Existing personnel transfer/change			

## F: Collaboration

**a:** We will continue to work collaboratively with the Greentown Public Library and the Indiana University Kokomo library to offer an annual community reading initiative called Howard County Reads. However, in keeping with our outcome of offering new benefits to library cardholders and/or library visitors, we will be looking for ways to make the program more impactful. With the recent creation of a new position at our library, Reader Services Coordinator, as of January 2016, we will be poised to take steps that contribute to the action, "Initiate services aimed at helping readers find reading material more easily."

We have also been participating in an MCLS pilot program that pairs an Indiana library and a Michigan library. Having been selected for the pilot, our partner is the Troy Public Library. We have some collaborative efforts in place and have others in the works. While we have not yet developed the specific actions, based on our conversations with Troy leadership I believe that they will play a role in furthering our goals that relate to having a healthier organization and better developed employees and managers.

**b:** Community partners will play a critical role in helping us to achieve many of our goals. Examples, organized under the appropriate service response, follow:

- *We enrich patrons' lives through diverse materials, convenient services, and quality programs and events*
  - There are several key places in this section of the plan that call for community support, but the largest falls under our goal to expand our active user base. One action specifies that we are to "Invite community members and organizations to become directly involved with us." The Discover Tech exhibit alone will incorporate the Purdue arm of Indiana University Kokomo, Ivy Tech Community College, our largest local employers including Delphi, Chrysler, and GM, and all of our local k-12 schools. It also includes partnering with United Way of Howard County, the Carver Center, and Kokomo Housing Authority to make sure that lower income students and families have the opportunity to become excited about STEM topics. Other local programming partners for exhibit-related events include small businesses such as AndyMark, a robotics supply firm, and Criterion Water.

- The other actions under this goal include approaching diverse organizations as potential partners, including the Kokomo chapter of Indiana Black Expo, and encouraging units of local government to communicate more directly and under positive circumstances.
- Our goal to “Create a renewed emphasis on our role as an educational partner in the community” involves working extensively with k-12 schools, colleges, and universities. Specific actions, such as reinstating ConverStations, will rely on building relationships with particular individuals who have skills to demonstrate and share.
- *We build community-wide loyalty and aspire to become a local destination*
  - Our goal to “Play a positive role in our community’s economic vitality” includes working closely with the local Chamber of Commerce.
  - “Focus on improved services to teens” has at least one action that will hinge on collaborating with one or more middle or high schools.
  - To “Develop our green spaces as community destinations” we will need to work with an organization to develop a community garden.
  - A large goal, “Offer tactile, outdoor children’s play/exploration options at one or more branches,” will require grant/funding partners at a minimum. It also has local partnership possibilities.

**Conclusion**

We thank the community members, board members, and employees who contributed to our plan as well as United Way of Howard County for sharing the community’s aspiration results with us. We are excited about the new opportunities this plan represents to serve our community in fresh ways.

**Appendix**

The ALICE report by the Indiana Association of United Ways can be read in its entirety online at <http://www.uwci.org/files/file/14uw-alice-report-ind-lowres-10-31-14.pdf>.

We are grateful for each of the 80+ employees who were willing to share their enthusiasm, hopes, and dreams with us and to think beyond their own experiences in imagining our future.

Thank you to our library trustees who willingly attended work sessions so they could help to develop our future direction:

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Mary Baker
Sharene Martin Brown
Joe Dunbar
Dee Emmons
Gil Hendrickson
Clee Oliver
Karen Sosbe

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Thank you, also, to the following community members who generously gave of their time to share with us their vision for our public library. We will be a stronger organization because you pushed us to be the very best we can be.

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Carrie Allen
Corey Anderson
Erin Bennett
Rob Blume
Dr. Phil Burgan
Sharon Reed Corbett
Steve Daily
Dave DuBois
Claudia Fike
Mayor Greg Goodnight
Hugo Gonzalez
Jessica Green
Katie Guyer
Ethan Heicher
Jamey Henderson
Aaron Hiatt
Lisa Holaday
Peggy Hollingsworth
Rob Hoshaw
Amber Jordan
Laura Johnson
Rev. Ruth Lawson
Dr. Robert Lee
Jason Lewis
Amy Lucas
Richard Miller
Sherry Rahl
Sally Tate Schafer
Dave Schulte
Laura Sheets
Abbie Smith
Travis Taflinger
Van Taylor
Barb Tucker
Cathy Valcke
Pat Waterman
Philemon Yebei

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