



Learn. Connect. Create. Innovate.

## 2019-2024 Strategic Plan

*The Royal Oak Public Library provides opportunities for all to learn, connect, create, and innovate.*

## Snapshot of Royal Oak and Community

The City of Royal Oak, located in southeast Oakland County, Michigan, is a wonderful place to live, work and play. Its central location, many amenities, continued investment in the community, and rich cultural and commercial tradition make Royal Oak a premier community in southeastern Michigan. Royal Oak is located about 15 minutes from a revitalized Detroit, 20 minutes from Canada, and 45 minutes from Ann Arbor. The city enjoys easy access to the surrounding areas due to its position at the crossroads of the world's first concrete highway, historic Woodward Avenue, I-696 and I-75. Royal Oak is also home to several premier metro Detroit events. Arts, Beats and Eats, which draws over 400,000 visitors each year, brings artists, musicians and food exhibits to our downtown. The Woodward Dream Cruise brings in 1.5 million visitors and 40,000 classic cars from around the globe each August, and is a must see for any classic car aficionado. With the city being only 11 square miles in size, residents can enjoy these events and the lively downtown just a few minutes away from their homes and abundant neighborhood parks.

Royal Oak Public Library focuses on providing access to resources to fulfill the community's informational needs; aims to be a center for innovation, collaboration and programming; and is committed to serving the public now and in the future.

### Royal Oak Today

According to the US Census Bureau 2018 Quick Facts:

- 59,112 residents
- 30,391 households
- Median income for households is \$74,140, while the mean household income is \$93,284.
- 56% of households have a bachelor's degree or higher
- 15.6% of residents are under 18
- 14% of residents are over 65
- 87.8% of households have access to broadband internet access
- 7% of the population at or under the poverty line

## Strong Performance Indicators

### Library Revenues

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Library Millage	\$2,015,850	\$2,063,681	\$2,134,657	\$2,197,664	\$2,268,051
Penal Fines	\$76,013	\$86,003	\$115,652	\$121,061	\$115,952
State Aid	\$31,014	\$33,710	\$35,602	\$37,428	\$39,681
Fines, Fees, Misc.	\$80,002	\$80,573	\$65,216	\$61,512	\$52,549
Grants/Gifts	\$20,216	\$34,360	\$12,579	\$11,784	\$2,307
Interest	\$3,712	\$7,305	\$9,601	\$14,213	\$20,477
Transfer from Fund Balance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$13,492
<b>Total operating revenues</b>	<b>\$2,265,772</b>	<b>\$2,226,807</b>	<b>\$2,305,362</b>	<b>\$2,443,662</b>	<b>\$2,512,509</b>

### Library Expenditures

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Personnel	\$1,344,542	\$1,421,955	\$1,385,725	\$1,442,043	\$1,496,716
Books, music, video	\$142,839	\$164,848	\$214,368	\$245,094	\$259,940
Other expenses*	\$702,814	\$697,168	\$687,601	\$673,441	\$755,853
<b>Total operating expenses</b>	<b>\$2,190,195</b>	<b>\$2,283,971</b>	<b>\$2,287,694</b>	<b>\$2,360,578</b>	<b>\$2,512,509</b>

\*Maintenance, services, supplies, utilities, debt service on bonds issued for 2006 renovation

### Library Operating Activities

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	% Change FY 2016-17 to FY 2017-18
Visitors	213,784	173,612	184,998	193,697	5%
Programs	507	425	513	513	0%
Program Attendance	12,915	13,518	15,503	16,794	8%
Reference Questions	31,048	28,736	27,280	26,346	-1%
Computer Uses	42,871	36,782	38,387	36,139	-6%
Lending Transactions	350,238	372,934	403,009	399,759	0%
Card Holders	33,233	33,140	24,317	24,262	0%
Collection Size	192,452	179,393	162,945	154,781	-5%



Ribbon-cutting ceremony for ROPL Sunday hours.



Samples of available seeds in ROPL's Seed Library.



ROPL outreach at ROMS Dawg Walk.

### Of Interest in 2017-2018

#### Increased Hours and Services

For the first time in Royal Oak Public Library's history, the library now offers Sunday hours. During the school year, the library is open from 1:00 - 5:00 PM on Sundays. The inaugural Sunday, September 10, 2017, was celebrated by the community and city officials in an official ribbon cutting ceremony. Sunday hours have proved to be popular and they have provided opportunities for more programs and Friends used book sales.

New initiatives were started including a seed library, service to the homebound, and Story Time Together circulating materials. The seed library includes seeds donated by several companies and seeds harvested and shared by residents. Royal Oak residents can take up to five packets at no cost. Programs about seeds, gardening, and environmental concerns are being offered at ROPL.

Service to the homebound is a mail delivery system where customers work with a librarian to select books and audio books of interest and these are sent to the resident who in turn mails them back to the library at no cost to the resident (and no trips to the Post Office).

Story Time Together are themed bags that contain picture books, a puppet or stuffed animal, and a music cd along with craft suggestions. They are designed for enriched learning experiences for preschool aged children. The bags can be checked out for a three week loan, just like books.

Our shared catalog and automated circulation system changed in May 2018 when a new system (CARL) was launched. Much preparation work went into the migration of the records and this has resulted in a more user friendly catalog.

#### Partnerships and Outreach

ROPL's partnerships with community groups, schools, businesses, and city boards enrich the community. The library board approved additional part time staff specifically to increase outreach services. The library is involved in a variety of community events held at the schools, parks, the Farmers Market, etc.

## The Strategic Planning Process

Prior to the great recession, the Board commissioned a strategic plan that laid out a four year plan. Shortly after this plan was adopted, a new library director and the board had to make significant budget cuts, which impacted both staffing and hours open to serve the public. Much to the credit of staff, the library remained committed to serving its community and the increased demands caused by the recession.

With a rebound in the economic environment, today's Board is seeing funding that is finally near levels of that prior to the recession. With careful financial stewardship, the library has been able to expand its services and continue to fulfill the mission of the Royal Oak Public Library.

In devising a new Strategic Plan, the Board considered the previous plan. The 2009-2013 plan outlined six themes for the future:

1. Focus on Royal Oak demographics
2. Pursue collaborations in the Royal Oak community
3. Increase convenience and accessibility
4. Convene the community
5. Strengthen and grow the collection
6. Increase marketing/education about programs and services

To start the Strategic Planning process, an online public survey was launched in 2013 to help shape and focus the direction of the next plan.

Answers from the question “What services could the Royal Oak Public Library provide that would make you want to use the library?” provided the first insight into the next direction of our mission and vision. When aggregated and put into a word cloud, we ended up with:



While the public input process had started, the board recognized the need to meet the Library of Michigan Quality Services Audit Checklist (QSAC), achieving the Essential Level in 2014, and recertification in 2018. QSAC is a voluntary management standards program that assists public libraries by setting benchmarks for Governance & Administration, Human Resources, Services, Collection Development, Technology, Facilities & Equipment and Public Relations. The Library of Michigan recognizes public libraries as they achieve each level. Libraries can be certified at the Essential, Enhanced and Excellent levels. In the interim between strategic plans, QSAC progress served as a temporary replacement for an official strategic plan.



In late 2017, the Board was on track to develop a strategic plan, and invited staff input. Using an online survey similar to public outreach, the following word cloud emerged from the answers to the question “What suggestions do you have for improving library operations through staffing and/or hours?”



In reviewing both word clouds, and after internal discussions it quickly became apparent that the theme emerging was simple: access. The theme of access would go on to help shape our new strategic plan, mission and vision statements.

In 2018, the Board elicited the help of a facilitator, Dr. Lauren Childs, to guide us through the completion of the strategic planning process. Through multiple sessions with both board members and staff, the following themes and goals were identified, refined, and turned into action steps that are now ready to be a strategic plan.

## Components of a Strategic Plan



Source:

[https://www.slideshare.net/daveaddy?utm\\_campaign=profiletracking&utm\\_medium=sssite&utm\\_source=ssslideview](https://www.slideshare.net/daveaddy?utm_campaign=profiletracking&utm_medium=sssite&utm_source=ssslideview)

## Mission

The mission statement answers the questions, “Why do we exist?” and “What is our fundamental purpose?”. It serves to help us clarify our priorities. In December of 2017, the Board adopted a new mission statement.

***The Royal Oak Public Library provides opportunities for all to learn, connect, create, and innovate.***

## Vision

The vision statement answers the question, “What must our library become to accomplish our mission?” and should provide direction for a compelling future. In February of 2019, the Board adopted a new vision statement.

***Royal Oak Public Library provides the community with an environment rich in opportunities for all. We cultivate intellectual, recreational, and collaborative experiences that enable people to learn, grow, and connect.***

## Values

Values describe how we must behave to achieve our vision. The Board and staff identified the following values:

- Public libraries are an essential part of communities.
- Library services should be current, relevant, and easily accessible, and provided without charge.
- Libraries are places to generate new ideas and knowledge.
- Libraries should be involved partners that are responsive to community needs.
- Libraries should be safe, inviting, and supportive spaces.
- Everyone is welcome at the Royal Oak Public Library.



## Goals and Measures

Goals serve to establish targets, timelines, and priorities. The Board and staff identified both short term and long term goals that, if implemented, help us to achieve the mission and vision of the Royal Oak Public Library.

**Note:** During the strategic planning process, “Elicit input from stakeholders in an ongoing way” was identified as important. Therefore, it should be employed as a strategy as we work toward achieving our goals.

### Short Term Goals

The following short term goals and action steps were developed by staff and board members to meet our mission and vision. These are intended to be accomplished within one year.

#### Short Term Goal 1- Conduct a space study to better utilize what we have

##### Action Steps

- Establish a Facilities committee including Board members and staff to oversee the process.
- Review and discuss the mission, vision, goals and objectives of the library as outlined in the strategic plan with library staff, Friends of Royal Oak Public Library, and trustees in order to understand the overall priorities.<sup>7</sup>
- Community analysis: Analyze Royal Oak Public Library history and community demographics in order to place the present conditions in an evolutionary perspective and relate project goals to community development.
- Library Analysis and Building Improvement Objectives:
  - Gather data via a community survey, and/or focus groups to better understand individual perceptions of library services and their related facility requirements.
  - Interview city political/economic leaders to discuss how library fits into the city center development plan and to better understand the political and economic potential for obtaining resources for library improvement.
  - Analyze library use data and existing facilities in relation to community and staff input and the goals and objectives of the strategic plan in order to develop library improvement objectives.
  - Evaluate our existing facility with regard to city building codes, ADA compliance, building systems, maintenance issues, and environmental quality.
  - List specific library building improvement objectives.



- Select and meet with a library space planning consultant for assistance in developing a plan to better utilize available space in the library including necessary renovations.

***Short Term Goal 2- Employ and retain happy, welcoming staff and provide for their ongoing professional development***

Action Steps

- Collect regular feedback from the staff
- Staff sets professional goals (with department heads)
- Positive accountability and recognition of goals accomplished
- Certified staff to have not less than 3 hours of continuing education/professional development per year

***Short Term Goal 3- Continually maintain and enhance our physical and digital collections***

Action Steps

- Create an online link for patrons to recommend items for collection
- Provide circulation and reference desk forms for patrons to recommend items for collection
- Explore adding non-traditional items to the collection
- Promote collections through social media
- Curate high-visibility rotating displays

***Short Term Goal 4- Capture community's attention and effectively communicate our available resources, programming, and services***

Action Steps

- Increase marketing communication on social media to raise awareness of library programs, collections, and capabilities
- Library representatives engage in regular, in-person outreach to schools on how to support student learning at the library
- Library representatives engage in regular, in-person outreach to senior centers and housing
- Library representatives engage in regular, in-person outreach to civic organizations
- Improve the physical signage in and around the library
- Improve *Leaflet/Twigs* distribution
- Include library in more city events
- One point person for promotion/marketing activities across youth and adult

## Long Term Goals

The following long term goals and action steps were developed by staff and board members to meet our mission and vision. These should be accomplished within three to five years.

### ***Long Term Goal 1- Continuously upgrade and maintain the physical space and functionality of the library to meet the evolving needs of the community***

- Incorporate recommendations from the space study
- Incorporate recommendations from staff
- Areas identified as needing consideration
  - Improved furniture
  - Digital sign
  - Meeting rooms
  - Teen room
  - Computer lab
  - More space in youth

### ***Long Term Goal 2- Invest in and make accessible innovative technologies***

- Expand technology in all areas of the library
- Build programming centered on leveraging new technologies
- Provide training for both the staff and the public

### ***Long Term Goal 3- Secure stable funding***

- Millage planning
- Optimize existing funding
- Explore new sources of revenue

### ***Long Term Goal 4- Ensure best practices in library governance, management, and curation in all areas of the library***

- Align with Library of Michigan (QSAC) standards at highest level
- Continually review and update library policies & procedures
- Develop and maintain best customer service practices
- Remove barriers to provide better access to materials and services
- Provide ongoing performance feedback for staff
- Engage in outcome-focused evaluation techniques
- Maintain collection that best serves the public
- Present a professional image to the public in written, spoken, and digital mediums

## Conclusion

This strategic plan was formed after hundreds of hours outreach, planning, and vision sessions to best determine the direction forward for the Royal Oak Public Library. Using the mission, vision, and goals outlined above, the Board and staff will operate on behalf of the people of Royal Oak for an experience at the library that is always improving.

There is no question that the implementation of this plan will require the support, hard work, and dedication of our staff. The Board will work directly with our Director to ensure goals are being achieved. On a department level, this plan will serve as a tool to help staff members work collaboratively toward accomplishing the mission of the Royal Oak Public Library through decisions made in purchasing and programming, as well as through their public interactions. Together, we will all work to ensure that the ***Royal Oak Public Library provides opportunities for all to learn, connect, create, and innovate.***

The Strategic Planning Committee thanks all who were involved in the development of this progressive and creative direction for the library. We are pleased to dedicate ourselves to enriching the quality of our community life.

## Strategic Planning Committee

### *Board of Trustee Members*

Stacie Woodward  
Roxanne Plater  
Brandon Kolo  
Linda Graham

### *Library Staff*

Mary Karshner  
*Former Director*

Emily Dumas  
*Director*

*Amy Howes, Barbara Szutkowski, Adrienne Breznau, Josh Boggs, Matthew Kessler,  
Melanie Nielsen, Matthew Day*

### *2019 Board of Trustees*

Stacie Woodward  
*President*

Roxanne Plater

Brandon Kolo  
*Vice President*

Karla Goetz

Scott Warheit  
*Secretary*

Mark Walton

Heather Murphy-Raymond

Melanie Macey  
*Trustee and Royal Oak City  
Commissioner*

Linda Graham

With thanks to former staff and board members, including Trustees Joan Koelsch and Paul Kanan, who worked to develop this plan for the community.

# Appendix

The following pages contain a sampling of data collected during the strategic planning process.

## Visioning

The following is the result of a Library board/staff vision session that identified the goals set by this strategic plan. The vision session involved a process of brainstorming followed narrowing and focusing to the most important of the goals.

### 1. LONG TERM GOALS

- A. Invest in (and make accessible) innovative technologies
  - More youth/teen technology
  - Build programming
  - Training
- B. Are able to upgrade and maintain our facilities based on need
- C. To create an aesthetically pleasing environment (exterior and interior):
  - Improved furniture
  - Digital sign
  - Meeting rooms
  - Better teen room
  - Computer lab
  - More space in youth
- D. Ensure we have funding
  - Millage planning
  - Optimize
  - Explore sources for additional funding

### 2. SHORT TERM GOALS

- A. Conduct space study to better utilize what we have
- B. Employ happy welcoming staff and provides ongoing professional development (staff sets goals, time, access, feedback from staff)



- C. Continually maintain and enhance our physical and digital collections (popular titles, shorten wait times, getting items out quickly)
- D. Attract awesome director who embodies our values
- E. Elicit input from stakeholders in an ongoing way (community surveys, staff input)
- F. Capture community's attention / Effectively communicate our available resources, programming and services (outreach, feedback from community members, extra staff time, PR, innovative programming, use of social media, bring in a consultant)

### 3. VALUES

- You can find what you need with easy access
- Everyone is welcome
- Services are free
- Royal Oak Public Library is innovative in its structures, resources and outcomes

### 4. MISSION

Royal Oak Library provides opportunities for all to enjoy learning, connecting, creating and innovation.

### 5. VISION

- Social hub of /more of our community
- Environment/use of space ("4 ways")
- Community asset
- Reflect the RO community
- Responsive to the RO community

## Goal Formation and Action Steps

Short and short term goals were developed through collaboration of Board members and staff. Small groups formed to provide input on goals, outcomes, and measures. The following are a summary of the results of these collaborations. It is of note that as goals and steps were formulated, a number of steps were implemented as work on the strategic plan continued. Some of those steps are highlighted in the following pages.

### I. Conduct space study to better utilize what we have

#### ACTION STEPS:

- A. Establish a Building committee including Board members and staff to oversee the process. \*Library board established new committee established January 2019, staff members to be added.
- B. Review and discuss the mission, vision, goals and objectives of the library as outlined in the strategic plan with library staff, Friends and trustees in order to understand the overall priorities.
- C. Community analysis: Analyze Royal Oak Public Library history and community demographics in order to place the present conditions in an evolutionary perspective and relate project goals to community development.
- D. Library Analysis and Building Improvement Objectives:
  - 1. Gather data via a community survey, and/or focus groups to better understand individual perceptions of library services and their related facility requirements.
  - 2. Interview city political/economic leaders to discuss how library fits into the city center development plan and to better understand the political and economic potential for obtaining resources for library improvement.
  - 3. Analyze library use data and existing facilities in relation to community and staff input and the goals and objectives of the strategic plan in order to develop library improvement objectives.
  - 4. Evaluate our existing facility with regard to city building codes, ADA compliance, building systems, deferred maintenance issues, and environmental quality.



5. List specific library building improvement objectives.
6. Select and meet with a library space planning consultant for assistance in developing a plan to better utilize available space in the library including necessary renovations.

Resources:

“Library Space Planning Guide” and accompanying “Worksheet” developed by the Connecticut State Library, 2014

“Planning Optimal Library Spaces: Principles, Processes, and Practices” by David R. Moore and Eric C. Shoaf, Rowman and Littlefield, 2018

## II. Employs happy welcoming staff and provides ongoing professional development

If the Royal Oak Public Library employs welcoming staff and provides ongoing professional development...

- A. Collect regular feedback from the staff
  - 1. Surveys (Google forms, easy to filter fields)
  - 2. Open comment center? - for between survey times
  - 3. Invite staff to Board meetings
- B. Work environment/customer service goals
  - 1. Professional goals
  - 2. Attend professional development trainings
- C. Positive accountability & recognition of goals accomplished
  - 1. Staff can share their accomplishments at department meetings and board meetings

## Sample Goal Setting Template with Examples

### **STAFF MEMBER GOALS** - Examples

#### Work Environments/Customer Service Related Goals

<u>Date</u>	<u>Goals</u>	<u>Steps to take</u>
6/20/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Patrons leave feeling engaged and like they contributed to the library community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a display that elicits a response from our visitors</li> </ul>
8/10/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask visitors what they value most about the library</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask 5 visitors each day this week.</li> </ul>
8/18/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>XYZ is frustrating to me! Find a way to improve it!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with department head to find a solution.</li> </ul>

#### Professional Goals

<u>Date</u>	<u>Goals</u>	<u>Steps to take</u>
7/15/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate more ( ) programing at Royal Oak Public Library.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find related training to attend OR visit a nearby library that does this.</li> </ul>
8/29/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do More XYZ related work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss options with department head.</li> </ul>
10/10/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be a voice for the staff at the Royal Oak Public Library. Get involved!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend board meetings.</li> <li>Help with director search.</li> </ul>

### III. Maintain and enhance our physical and digital collections

The small group assigned this area of the strategic plan came up with thirteen short term goals. Two of these, “Increase Funding for Collection” and “Increase Hours for Item Processing” were included in the 2018-2019 budget. An example of the template follows:

#### Partial Circulation Goal Template:

Action/Description	Rationale	Requisites	Steps
Online Link for Patrons to Recommend Items for Collection	Patrons can easily suggest items for the collection; low-maintenance communication link to the public.	Permission to add link to Facebook / website / e-newsletter.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create google forms survey(s)</li> <li>2. Agree on disclaimer verbiage</li> <li>3. Hyperlink on sites, pages, letters</li> <li>4. Assign librarians to check responses periodically</li> </ol>
Circulation / Reference Desk Forms for Patrons to Recommend Items for Collection (Add paper form and dropbox at reference desks allowing customers to recommend items for the collection. Dropbox is optional, but advisable for anonymity.	Secondary to the online link, as patrons onsite can easily speak with librarians.	Decide where forms / boxes should be. Determine whether boxes are necessary, and decide how to procure or build. <i>Suggestion: Fun youth activity would be to build dropboxes!</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Design recommendation forms</li> <li>2. Print copies and stock at desks</li> <li>3. Create a sign or flyer</li> <li>4. Assign librarians to collate replies</li> </ol>
Obtain a CD/DVD Polisher Partner with Friends to purchase a CD or DVD repair machine.	Lightly damaged discs can be repaired rather than discarded, saving cost of repurchase or allowing resale by Friends.	Funds to purchase. Place to store.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Obtain price estimate</li> <li>2. Add to Friends budget request</li> <li>3. Purchase</li> <li>4. Train staff and Friends</li> </ol>



<p>Follow-up on Preliminary Non-Traditional Items in Collection</p> <p>After six months, follow-up with Adult Services on success of craft kits, to determine if worthwhile to add more non-traditional items (sewing kits, gardening / lawn tools, experts, etc.) to collection.</p>	<p>Gauge community interest in library as source for non-traditional items.</p>	<p>Current non-traditional items are fully promoted to public.</p>	<p>1. Follow-up with Adult Dept on interest in these new items. 2. Determine if this warrants expanding collection.</p>
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