# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We Hear You</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westfield Memorial Library’s Vision</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westfield Memorial Library’s Mission</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Service Values</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Goals</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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CONSULTANTS
Library Development Solutions
Leslie Burger
Alan Burger
Dear Neighbors and library patrons,

Westfield Memorial Library's origins date back to 1873 when a literary group of women started the “Every Saturday Book Club” with the goal of forming a circulating library “worthy of our growing village.” Almost 150 years later, that goal still rings true. Our Strategic Plan aims to create a space that inspires, delights, welcomes and engages all members of our community.

In short, a library that is worthy of our village.

Developing a Strategic Plan is a collaborative process, one that was made more challenging during a pandemic. I’d like to thank the members of our Strategic Planning Committee, which included library trustees, members of the Friends of the Westfield Memorial Library and library staff, for their thoughtful dedication in creating a future path for our beloved library. We are grateful for the input we received from various focus groups, key stakeholders and, most importantly, the 1000+ community members who responded to our survey.

Our Plan is a living document, meant to be revisited and revised on a regular basis. We welcome continued feedback and input from our patrons. After all, we are here to serve you.

Michelle Habayeb
President,
WML Board of Trustees
The Westfield Memorial Library began a new planning cycle in 2019 to ensure that the library is positioned to serve the needs of local residents and to align resources with those needs. The Library Director, Phil Israel, and the Board of Trustees began that process with a full Board Retreat to discuss the issues and opportunities that face the library. Subsequently, in order to initiate the new planning cycle, the library began a strategic assessment process to:

1) elicit community comments about the library and ideas for the future
2) evaluate what other area libraries offer to their communities
3) plan operations and program improvements in response to these comments and to the community’s changing needs
4) ensure that the library will be able to serve future generations
5) determine staffing, hours, policies and collections that are required to deliver the kind of service that Westfield residents need and expect

The Westfield Memorial Library (WML) has accomplished many projects during the last few years, many with the assistance of the Friends of the Westfield Memorial Library, including the following:

• Installed new furniture, lighting, and carpeting throughout the main floor
• Reupholstered and refinished all chairs in public areas
• Refinished all study carrels
• Updated the sound system in the Meeting Room
• Completed a new mural in the Children’s Department
• Purchased and assembled new furniture, service desk, end panels and wall mounted activity center in Children’s Department
• Expanded digital collections
• Installed high-speed charging ports
• Replaced/upgraded ILS servers
• Redesigned and launched a new website
• Relaunched the library’s YouTube Channel
• Updated the library’s WiFi system to allow for increased user traffic
• Initiated self-checkout
• Initiated cashless payments and remote payments
We heard many ideas and suggestions about the future of WML. We spoke with over 1,000 people during the focus group meetings in the library and through an online and print survey, as well as with many of the staff. Responses were thoughtful and helpful.

Westfield residents and library staff told us that:

- Collections should be refreshed and decluttered with the addition of more new print titles and digital content

- Library staff needs to respond actively and quickly to the needs of teens and preteens with expanded programs, homework help, tutoring, and structured after-school resources

- The library needs to adapt its policies and services to respond to demographic changes in Westfield, including the increasing numbers of families where both parents work, more children and active seniors, and a growing, more diverse population

- Access to digital resources and devices and the necessary training in how to use them must be expanded

- Parking-related issues should be addressed

- Greater community engagement is required by connecting residents with each other via focused conversations and topical discussions

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1 The report “We Hear You” is available in the library, featuring comments and data from the survey and focus groups sessions. Our consultants, Leslie and Alan Burger also assisted with a space analysis report of the building and identified gaps between services and the space to deliver them.
Westfield Memorial Library’s Vision

The Westfield Memorial Library will inspire and delight all residents every day.

Westfield Memorial Library’s Mission

Westfield Memorial Library connects and engages all residents to make our community a better place to live.
Our Service Values

The staff and Board of Trustees of the Westfield Memorial Library embrace these values in serving our community:

- All people are treated with respect and without judgment
- The library has an essential role in promoting the power of ideas, debate, discussion, and civic engagement
- Library visitors encounter a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment
- Talented and caring staff are here to serve all residents
- Trustees and staff are careful stewards of library resources and funds
- The Board of Trustees and library staff are visionary, adaptable and embrace change to enhance the library experience
Our Goals

Everyone Is Welcome
Engage And Delight Residents

Build Space And Room For All
Plan For The Future
Goal 1

Everyone Is Welcome

As resources, collections, and services evolve according to residents’ interests, so will the library’s physical space. Libraries are more than books and include activities that nurture ideas and learning through various forms of content and experiences. Westfield Memorial Library will be the hub for personal and community discovery for all residents.

Objectives

A. Create a calendar of irresistible virtual and on-site programming

B. Change the library’s public spaces to create a welcoming, flexible environment to meet changing needs

C. Adopt advancements in technology to make the user experience seamless
Libraries, on average, remove 5% to 8% of their collection annually to make room for new items. However, in recent years, public libraries have become more focused on “right-sizing” their collections to accommodate changing library use and have increased reductions to create other space uses. Westfield residents expect the library to have materials that are topical and in demand. Survey respondents say that they often come to the library for a book or a bestseller. The collection can be resized, refreshed, and reorganized to deliver an excellent library experience for all.

Objectives

A. Refresh the materials in the collection to anticipate community needs

B. Ensure the physical collection aligns with the population and library space

C. Organize and display books in ways that encourages browsing and discovery
The library will develop new access to its resources as well as an expanded capacity to provide services. Partnerships are key to this goal and we want to ensure that all patrons, of all ages, are aware of our resources and engaged with the library experience.

Objectives

A. Enhance current relationships and establish new partnerships with community organizations

B. Expand volunteer opportunities

C. Review the library’s existing use policies and make changes to enhance users’ library experiences

D. Develop a revised marketing plan

E. Increase ability to reach active patrons as well as the entire community
The staff team and Board of Trustees are invested in the community and its success, committed to the library’s vision and mission, and eager to reimagine the WML. We commit to ensuring that the library will be here for the next generation. We make this commitment so that the library will continue to be the center for all patrons of all ages to engage with each other. We will continue to be good stewards of this important resource.

Objectives

A. Align staff and resources with the strategic goals

B. Align the library board with the new strategic goals

C. Imagine the future

D. Expand current revenue streams and develop new ones