

RICHLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

# RICHLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2033



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# LETTER FROM THE LIBRARY MANAGER



Libraries have provided fundamental resources to communities around the world for millennia. Here in our City, the free services that we offer have evolved with our population. The Richland Public Library may have started as a collection of fundamental resources, but, today, the library is also flourishing as a melting pot of ideas and fellowship for all ages. Through all these wonderful improvements, the library has always been invested in supporting the next chapter of life in Richland.

We are proud to deliver a 10-year strategic plan that was influenced by Richland residents for the City of Richland. We owe a great deal of thanks to everyone who contributed to its creation. Our collaboration doesn't stop there though. A plan only comes to life when the community it serves is along for the ride. I encourage the residents and future residents of Richland to be a part of this journey. Get a library card, check out our collection, participate in a fun program, give feedback, lead a library event, volunteer, display artwork, connect with others in our meeting space, or become a partner!

A library is at its best when it adapts with its community to reflect the residents, organizations, volunteers, partners, and City employees that make up the neighborhoods we share every day. With your help, the library's potential in this City is limitless, and I look forward to brainstorming our next big adventure together.

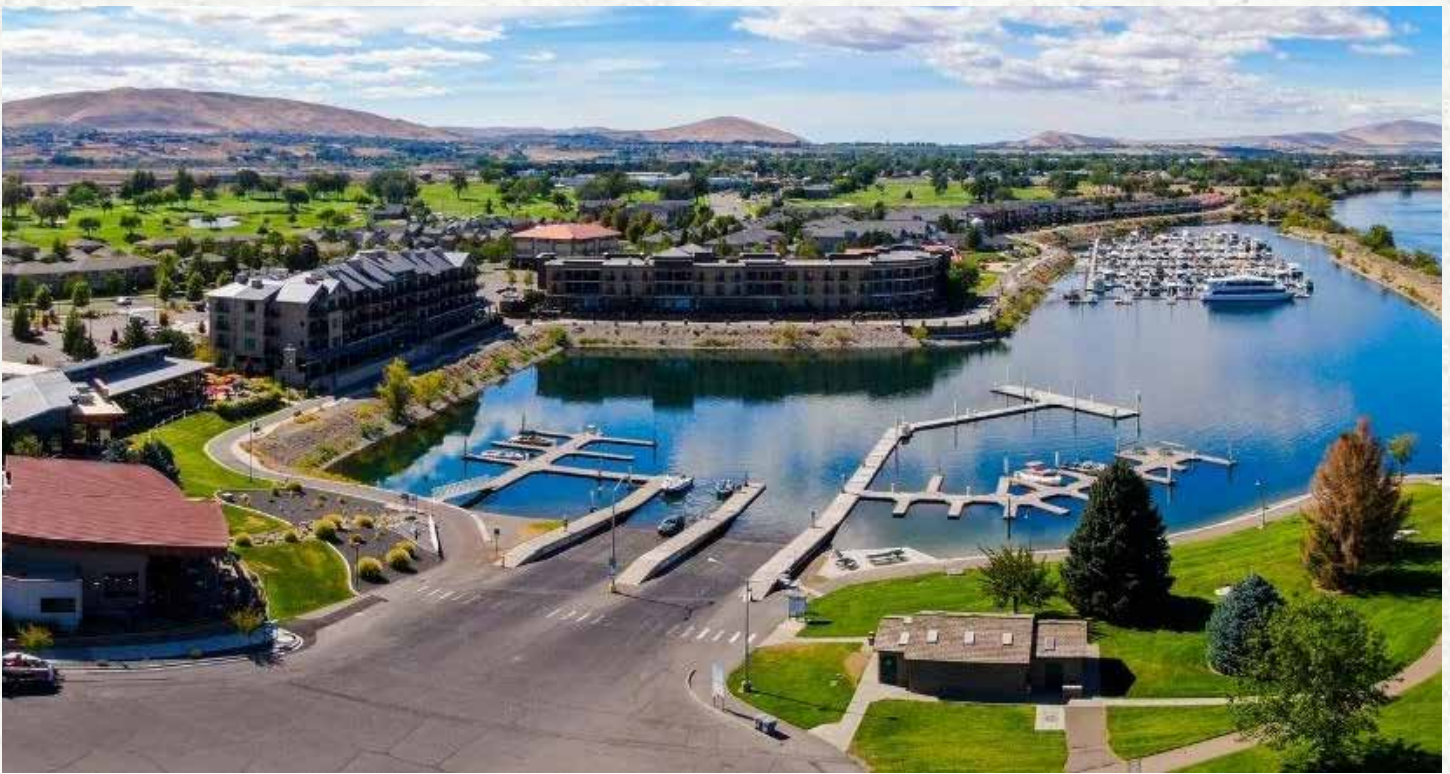
Chris Nulph  
*Library Manager*

# OUR COMMUNITY

Throughout the course of this strategic plan, the library is often referenced as a place for community. Where did that community start and where is it going? Our community is far more than just boundaries on a map. With a long history and bright future, the City is one we are proud to call home. Located near the confluence of the Yakima and Columbia Rivers, this is home to traditional lands of the Nez Perce, Palouse, Umatilla, Walla Walla, Wanapum, and Yakama tribes. As we moved into the 20th century, Richland became one of the Manhattan Project sites and a critical cog in the World War II effort and beyond. The City became accustomed to quality government

services during that time as a federally planned community. The City of Richland was incorporated in 1958 and is now part of the Tri-Cities region, which includes Kennewick, Pasco, and West Richland.

The innovative spirit is still alive and well in our community. Science and medicine are among the highest employers in the City, with Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, Kadlec Regional Medical Center, and Bechtel National driving much of the area's workforce. The region also supports a booming wine and agricultural industry.





With more than 300 days of sunshine each year, weather that ranges from wintertime snow to summertime heat, and an average yearly precipitation of just 7.7 inches, Richland is a community in which residents and visitors alike enjoy an abundance of recreational, educational, and business opportunities. Richland is known for its many parks and paved walking trails throughout the city; recreational activities ranging from waterskiing, boating, and fishing on the Columbia River to walking miles of paved riverfront trails, hiking Badger Mountain, and golfing at Columbia Point; a vibrant arts community hosting concerts, plays, festivals, and art shows; hundreds of wineries, craft breweries, and restaurants within easy driving distance; and much more.

As of 2020, Richland was a community of about 60,560 residents, with the greater Tri-Cities having a population of 237,884. It is a community that has substantially grown and continues to be one of the fastest-growing areas in Washington State. In an area full of innovators and entrepreneurs, Richland will continue to be at the forefront of tomorrow. This is the community the City of Richland supports through quality municipal services, and we are honored to be a part of its unique history and future.

# OUR LIBRARY



Initial library service in Richland was established in 1944 by the Hanford Engineer Works Employees' Association, providing resources to the employees of the Hanford Project. Once the organization dissolved, the collection eventually found a home at the Richland Public Library in April 1951. Doris Roberts received the honor of being the first manager of the library, when the General Electric Company opened a library building in downtown Richland. Doris maintained that title for the first 33 years of library operation. She noted the tremendous community support at the time: "At some time or another, almost every organization in Richland has contributed financially or with service to the support of their library."



In August 1959, the library transferred operation to the City of Richland, and it has been a municipal service ever since. In 1962, the Library Board set the expectation for library service with this statement of purpose: "The Richland Public Library shall endeavor to provide facilities, staff, and services which will anticipate the needs and stimulate the interest of as many children and adults as possible. New concepts in library procedures, services, and programming shall be introduced when applicable to the interest of the community and economically practicable."

Today, the Richland Public Library is a result of that early purpose statement. It is housed in a modern, light-filled, 58,000-square-foot building for public use. It currently has two study rooms, two conference rooms, a large gallery, a book sale room run by the Friends of the Richland Public Library, and a two-story lobby that frequently hosts art exhibits and displays from a diverse collection of community groups. The library currently has a physical collection of more than 167,000 items, plus thousands more titles available online. Our total physical and digital circulation, including renewals, was 709,920 in 2021. By the beginning of 2022, we had over 46,000 library cardholders in our system.

The Richland Public Library provides a robust array of programming for all ages. The library traditionally performs among the highest per capita program engagement for all libraries in Washington state serving between 25,001 and 100,000 people. The library has a long history of public enjoyment and support in this community with no signs of letting up. Over the next decade, we will continue to find new and creative ways for weaving the library into the fabric of Richland.





# VISION

All Richland residents experience the library as a durable, trusted institution for the public good that is finely interwoven into the entire fabric of our community.

# MISSION

Be the hope-inspiring presence in our community where every person belongs and is supported in enjoyment, learning, and understanding.





# VALUES

## **INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM**

The library is committed to the right of library users to confidentially access information from all points of view without restriction, censure, or oversight.

## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

The library will support an environment where all individuals have equitable access to services, are valued and respected for their unique traits, and are welcomed to be a part of the library.

## **PROACTIVE HOSPITALITY**

The library is committed to a proactive approach to customer service in which staff make the first move to help customers. Library staff go out of their way to first find potential needs and then resolve them before customers need to ask for help.

## **LITERACY**

The library is committed to helping children and adults develop the ability to read, to use technology, and to seek and effectively utilize information.

## **PUBLIC AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY**

The library is committed to increasing public awareness of libraries and the critical role they play in transforming lives and communities through diverse forms of education.

## **PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION**

The library is committed to developing and sustaining relationships between the library and other entities for the benefit of the residents and the community.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

The library is committed to mindful use of resources and to supporting sustainability broadly through programming, collections, exhibits, events, advocacy, communication, and library building and space design.

## **WORKPLACE CULTURE**

The library is committed to fostering a workplace where staff, volunteers, and advocates feel valued, included, and empowered to champion the library's vision, values, and purposes.

# ROLES OF THE LIBRARY

Through the strategic planning process, three key roles for how Richland Public Library serves our community emerged. These roles set the context for how we will achieve the goals of this strategic plan.



## **PUBLIC SQUARE**

The library is a welcoming, comfortable, and evolving community space for everyone. It serves the multifaceted needs of our community members—creative, cultural, economic, educational, intellectual, interpersonal, recreational, and social. Wherever library service is offered, it embodies a friendly, respectful, safe, and hospitable environment. The library is a valued community destination and a trusted hub for neighborly fellowship.

## **USER EXPERIENCE**

Hope, belonging, and a sense of well-being.



## **COMMUNITY ADVOCATE**

Leveraging outreach and partnerships, the library facilitates a connected web of community support. In this way, the library is without walls—meeting people where they are and facilitating their access to a network of library and regional resources. The library is committed to the growth and well-being of its partners.

## **USER EXPERIENCE**

A supported and resilient community.



## **KNOWLEDGE NURSERY**

The library is fertile ground for the propagation and nurturing of knowledge for everyone in our community. It is the ultimate source of reliable information. The library is an easily accessible virtual and physical environment that facilitates the freedom to discover new ideas and cultivate the diverse learning pursuits of residents throughout their lifetimes. Its favorable conditions improve quality of life for every person and for the City as a whole.

## **USER EXPERIENCE**

An inspired and empowered City.

# GOALS OF THE LIBRARY

This strategic plan sets out three goals for Richland Public Library over the next ten years. The actions recommended in this document in the upcoming strategies section will contribute to the achievement of these goals.



## GOAL A

All residents experience, enjoy, and benefit from the library.

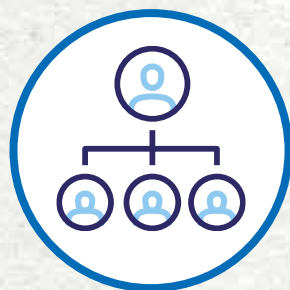
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## GOAL B

All residents experience convenient access to the library from anywhere in the city.

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## GOAL C

Community members and advocacy partners effectively connect through a network of library and regional resources.



## 1. Relevancy

Library users should be aware of what the library has to offer, and the library needs to provide users with benefits that make using the library worthwhile. This is what makes the library relevant.



- a.** Develop and describe a plan of service and budget that focuses on the three roles of the library: public square, knowledge nursery, and community advocate.
- b.** Align service, support, and staffing models.
- c.** Develop organizational capacity to understand what is relevant to the library's served, underserved, and unserved market segments.
  - Market intelligence
  - Needs assessment
  - Various outreach methods
  - Partnerships
- d.** Launch and sustain an effective public awareness and advocacy campaign.
- e.** Refurbish, refresh, and re-brand the existing library
- f.** Incorporate the roles of the library in marketing materials and public information.
- g.** Involve Library Board of Trustees, Friends of the Library, and the Library Foundation.
- h.** Identify resources for investments that will progressively enable achievement of the 2033 vision and goals.



## 2. Inclusion

To ensure residents feel included, the library will identify what residents need to create a continuous loop of learning. We will seek out partners to help us achieve this.



- a.** Engage and sustain mutually beneficial relationships with community partners.
- b.** Using creative and resourceful methods, determine who the hard-to-reach residents are, and how best to serve them.
- c.** Select smart outreach and programming, focused on engaging hard-to-reach residents.
- d.** Collaborate with partners to make residents' access to needed services, resources, and expertise convenient, timely, and accurate.
- e.** Host partners, providers, and programs through the physical and virtual spaces of the library.
- f.** Creatively conduct continuous outreach and assessment, and sculpt responsive services and collections.

# STRATEGIES



## 3. Accessibility

The library is committed to accessibility by removing barriers and creating a presence that includes physical spaces, as well as virtual, distributed programmatic offerings throughout the City, and through a network of partners and collaborators.

- a. Maximize the interior and exterior spaces of the existing library.
- b. Expand the physical proximity of the library with a location in south Richland.
- c. Develop, implement, and improve the “library without walls” concept to achieve a library presence proximate to residents and integral to the neighborhoods and community at large.
- d. Expand partnerships and possible reciprocity with other libraries.
- e. Utilize cutting-edge technology to increase accessibility.
- f. Through an equity, diversity, and accessibility lens, improve operations and practices affecting residents and staff.
- g. Develop a physical and virtual collection that is reflective of all our community.
- h. Continuously connect with residents to learn how the library can improve access.

# SUCCESS MEASURES

The success of the strategies in this document will be assessed using these five success measures. Specific criteria for these measures will be identified and reviewed through the development of annual work plans.



## **A. GROW USERSHIP**

The resident user base of the library increases proportionately to match or exceed population growth.

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## **B. GROW CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

Improve the experience, including hospitality, enjoyment, and benefit.

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## **C. GROW ACCESSIBILITY**

Increase access to the library—physically, virtually, and programmatically.

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## **D. GROW COMMUNITY ADVOCACY**

Regional advocacy support is effective in meeting client and partner needs and strengthening resiliency.

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## **E. GROW RELEVANCY**

The library is a valued institution that inspires hope, belonging, and a sense of well-being.

# OUR PROCESS



The creation of this plan has been an inclusive, collaborative, and iterative process. We believe the process to help inform the strategic plan is one of the most robust public input efforts to occur in the history of the library. We are thankful for the committed work of many individuals who have made it a reality.

To encourage the broadest participation by the community, we announced our planning process on the City and the library websites. We invited participation at physical and virtual forums. We set up a social networking platform called Social Pinpoint. This website informed the public about the strategic planning

process and provided a means for anyone to post online feedback, comments, questions, and ideas. We set up comment boards at various locations as well. We interviewed many specific stakeholder organizations, groups, and individuals to listen to voices that may have otherwise not had the opportunity to provide input. We met with citywide leadership staff and City Council members who serve and represent the community. Also central to the process was the Library Planning Team, a group of library staff led by Christopher Nulph, Library Manager, for its role in reflecting and responding to the community input.





Central to this process was the 16-member, community-based Library Strategic Planning Task Force. Invited to bring a cross-section of community perspectives, the Task Force participated in monthly work sessions from January through March 2022. The Task Force helped process findings from meetings, forums, and key informant interviews, as well as input from individuals and the Library Planning Team and staff. From this analysis, the Task Force helped the Project Team identify community needs and the prospective roles of the library in addressing those needs over a 10-year span.

The Library Board of Trustees recognized the need for a strategic plan and has overseen the process through a Trustee representative on the

Task Force and via Project Team briefings at its monthly meetings. This plan is supported and affirmed by the Board of Trustees.

From all the foregoing synthesis, the Library Planning Team developed the strategic framework for the next decade. This strategic plan is the overarching framework for guiding policies, practices, services, and resource allocation decisions that will achieve the goals, and ultimately, the vision for 2033. The strategies include that library management will take steps to actualize the plan. Specific work plans will be created and executed yearly with the goal of balancing circumstantial variables with plan progress.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: DATA SOURCES

Our engagement was conducted with multiple stakeholders, including 124 hours of Library Planning Team interviews, forums, work sessions, and library staff meetings.

Social Pinpoint was used to collect survey data and capture online comments. Community input was also captured from idea boards, interviews, pop-up engagement, and planned events. 509 comments were recorded from all sources.



### INTERVIEWS

- Community forums
- City and community leaders
- Residents
- Key informants and other stakeholders
- Community Task Force work sessions



### INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS

- Community needs
- Roles of the library
- Challenges to access
- Future imperatives

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Our thanks to the following teams and individuals who invested their time and energy in our process and to every member of the community who participated in forums, surveys, and other forms of input. Every bit of input has been heard and considered, and we are thankful.

We would like to thank all of the staff for their work in developing this plan and for the future execution of this plan.

## **LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLANNING TASK FORCE MEMBERS**

- Karen Buxton
- Andrew Cook
- YiChien Cooper
- Amanda Divine
- Nancy Doran
- Megan Fullmer
- Dori Luzzo Gilmour
- Nadine Kemp
- Syd Koegler
- Isaac Marroquin
- KD Organ
- Sarah Rapoza
- Alan Rither
- Clinton Sherman
- Steve Slate
- Anne Spilman

## **LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

- Emily Booth, Chair
- Lindsay Lightner, Vice Chair
- Karen Buxton
- Cara Hernandez
- Kurt Maier

## **RICHLAND CITY COUNCIL**

- Michael Alvarez, Mayor
- Terry Christensen, Mayor Pro Tem
- Sandra Kent
- Jhoanna Jones
- Phillip Lemley
- Ryan Lukson
- Theresa Richardson

## **LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM**

- Joe Schiessl, Parks and Public Facilities Director
- Chris Nulph, Library Manager
- Lisa Adams, Parks & Recreation Coordinator
- Theresa Barnaby, Collection Development & Circulation Supervisor
- Michelle Haffner, Teen Services Librarian
- Gavin Lightfoot, Adult Service Librarian
- Michael Scarfo, Reference Supervisor
- Daurice Siller, Library Technical Support Specialist
- Johanna Talbott, Library Technical Support Specialist

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING CONSULTANTS**

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- Jason Genck, BerryDunn
- Ruth Metz, Ruth Metz Associates
- Adrian Newman, Adrian-Designs.com



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