

MOBILE PUBLIC LIBRARY



FY18-FY22

Strategic Plan

The Mobile Public Library is a customer-driven organization. We will focus on what our customers tell us, being aware of and responsive to their behaviors, wants and needs. Our staff will strive to be innovative, creative and proactive. We will strive to be a high quality, high performance agency, emphasizing problem solving authority and responsibility provided by front line employees as they work with customers at the point of contact and concern.

Mobile Public Library

FY18 – FY22 STRATEGIC PLAN

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Management Team

Scott Kinney—Director
Robert Hyde—Comptroller
Carla Garmon-Robinson—Human Resources Officer
Ozzie Elortegui—Facilities/Purchasing
Chris Cox—Circulation Services
Robbin Glaser—Youth Services
Steve Prager—Moorer Branch Library
Heather Williams—Semmes Branch Library
Lauryn Poynor—Technical Services
Lynn Hudson—Theodore Oaks Branch Library
Gloria Williams—Toulminville Branch Library
Janet Silvernail—Information Technology

Margie Calhoun—Assistant Library Director
Amber Guy—Public Relations Officer
Nancy Anlage—Library Programming Coordinator
Elaine Crook—Bookmobile/Outreach Services
Judy Sigler—Reference Services
Hesper Montford—Local History/Genealogy
Sheryl Somathilake—Saraland Public Library
Fran Siemssen—Technical Services
Betsy Gray—Technical Services
Janette Curry—West Regional Library
Geraldine Wells—West Regional Library

Library Staff—Focus Group

Scott Kinney—Director
Robert Hyde—Comptroller
Ron Clark—Information Technology
Shatena Coleman—Circulation Services
Frank Tigner—Youth Services
Linda Wells—Reference Services
Kharen Chapman—Youth/Teen Services

Carly Akers—Reference Services
Sara McGough—Youth Services
Tracey Quinsey—Youth Services
Zhaleh Parchami—Reference Services
Lynn Hutchins—Circulation/Reference Services
Veronica McCoo—Circulation/Reference Services
Jody Messer—Technical Services

Library Board

Kim Willett—Library Board Chair
John Browning—Library Board Treasurer
Scott Delaney—Library Board
Derrick Brown—Library Board

Kesshia Davis—Library Board Vice-Chair
Barbara Lenaghan—Library Board
Brenda Jackson—Library Board

Mission Statement

*THE MOBILE PUBLIC LIBRARY'S MISSION IS TO **SUPPORT LITERACY AND CONNECT OUR COMMUNITY.***

MOBILE PUBLIC LIBRARY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. We will be a customer-driven organization, and we will focus on what our customers tell us, being aware of and responsive to their behaviors, wants and needs.
2. Our staff will strive to be innovative, creative and proactive.
3. We will strive to be a high quality, high performance agency, emphasizing problem solving authority and responsibility provided by front line employees as they work with customers at the point of contact and concern.
4. We must be aware that we are operating in an era of limited resources, but at the same time we are faced with ever-expanding customer needs and expectations and we will strive to fulfill those expectations.
5. We must be able to successfully harness technology and make it work for us and our patrons.
6. We are living and working in a period of unprecedented and rapid change, and we must be alert to these changes and position ourselves to not merely cope with them, but to take advantage of the opportunities they offer.
7. We cannot exist in isolation, but must work and partner with other agencies, businesses, institutions, and groups.
8. Our marketing, merchandising, promotion, and salesmanship must be great!

Introduction

For much of its recent history, the Mobile Public Library's priorities were clear. For nearly twenty-five years, addressing the inadequacies of the Library's collections, technology and buildings were the Library System's most pressing needs. In the late 1990's and early/mid 2000's the Library was fortunate enough to receive funding to construct two new facilities, the West Regional Library and a new Toulminville Branch Library. In addition, the Ben May Main Library was expanded and remodeled in 2007. A new Bookmobile was also purchased in 2015.

With the recent upgrade of the Library's network infrastructure and the acquisition of new server hardware in FY15, it became clear that the Library's collections, staffing levels, especially having dedicated young adult staff, and library facilities would be the focal point in this planning cycle. However, the Library facilities in some cases do compare well to other libraries that serve a population of similar size.

The Mobile Public Library is fortunate to have ten library locations. The Ben Main May Library is located in the heart of Downtown Mobile. The Mobile Public Library also offers Bookmobile/Outreach Services to the community and serves as an integral part of the Library's public service platform. However, acquiring increased funding to keep pace with inflation and to support the Library's services and facilities can be a perpetual struggle. The Mobile Public Library's budget has not been able to rebound to the levels it received prior to the economic downturn which began in FY10.

Over the last several years the Library Administration, Library Board and Friends of the Library Board have done a great deal to increase public and private funding for the Library's collections, programming and the overall services offered to the citizens of the City of Mobile and Mobile County. Even with recent budgetary setbacks, the Mobile Public Library's collections match those of the leading libraries in the state. However, acquiring additional copies of popular titles is still required to provide the best possible service to our library patrons, especially within the Library's electronic offerings.

What do you value most about the Library?

"The ability to have access to information at the library and the choice of books for entertainment."

Recent progress has been made upgrading the Library System's technology infrastructure permitting the Library System Board of Trustees to consider the means of meeting some of Mobile Public Library System's other library needs, mainly the facilities, staffing levels and library programming. In addition, the Library System Board of Trustees believes maintaining current technology infrastructure and acquiring additional public computers throughout the Mobile Public Library Branches is also important.

The Library Board believes that reading will continue to be the way that people come to understand complex ideas, and that literature will continue to be one of the best ways of knowing the world.

Publicly owned collections of books, sound recordings, movies, and public computing will continue to enrich the life of the community. Children will continue to benefit from the enthusiasm of library staff members and the exposure to books, stories, and literature.

The more sophisticated and complex the internet becomes, the more users will benefit from the assistance of professional, well trained and dedicated library staff members to help find the information they need.

It is clear that public libraries will be changing in fundamental ways because of this new technology. Already we have seen an increase in library use in the digital arena.

The reference staff reports that questions are becoming more complex, and that the patron making the inquiry is often somewhat desperate, having already used a variety of resources before turning to the Library.

Student assignments in some cases place less emphasis on the use of books and periodicals, and now require the use of websites and online databases. Students are often unwilling to use print sources or to trust the information in them.

Mobile area residents are now turning to the Internet for information they once obtained from the Library System. Other residents turn to the Mobile Public Library for access to these same Internet resources. The Library's own website and the Internet resources made available through it are factors in transforming the nature and frequency of library use by City of Mobile and Mobile County residents.

Certainly providing improved access to electronic resources as well as training and providing guidance in their use will be a part of the Mobile Public Library's future. Educating and guiding people in the evaluation and selection of information sources will also be a major part of the Library's long term plan.

What do you value most about the Library?

"Its very Existence."

"The people who can help me find the information I need."

"The friendly helpful staff."

The Strategic Planning Process

The Strategic Planning process was a threefold process. The first step consisted of focus group discussions and SWOT Analysis with the Library Management Team and a group of library staff members chosen to represent all library branches and departments. The second step was to create and implement a user satisfaction survey for the public.

This survey was available both online and in print format. 95.3% of Library users marked that their overall satisfaction with the Library was excellent/good. The final step was the process of reviewing and discussing the Plan with the Library Board of Trustees. Note: comments from the public survey will appear throughout this document.

As we went through this planning process, the Library Board of Trustees came to believe that the Mobile Public Library's most pressing library need in the short run is to maintain the Library's current services and staffing levels. In addition, the Mobile Public Library needs to clearly establish itself as an important component of our communities as the new electronic information center, while not abandoning traditional information resources.

The Mobile Public Library needs to be an advocate for reading, seizing every opportunity to encourage parents to read to children, to encourage children to become independent recreational readers, and to encourage adults to see reading as essential to individual growth and enrichment and one of the most enjoyable forms of recreation.

What do you value most about the Library?

“The Mobile Public Library System provides access to a world of information and imagination to anyone who enters its doors. Additionally, the Bookmobile increases the service area to those who might not be able to take advantage of its treasures. As a former school teacher, I applaud your children's year round, well-rounded programs”

The necessary marketing of Library services and resources is a city and county-wide undertaking, but it is essential that this effort focus on those segments of the community that currently under-utilize the Library.

In order to accomplish this, the Library Board believes that the next five years need to be dedicated to the establishment of a consistent and increased funding stream, to maintain and increase staffing levels where appropriate and to develop a long term Library System Facilities Plan.

The Board will annually revise the objectives and activities of this *Plan*, and will review the entire *Plan* in 2022 to determine if its goals are still appropriate.

OUR Strategic Goals

GOAL I:

Advocate for a consistent and an increased level of funding to meet the Library’s Mission, maintain staffing levels and facilities so the public can be the beneficiary.

The City of Mobile and Mobile County’s citizens deserve the best possible library services available. In order to adequately support the library collections, programming, technology and the overall perception of the Library, the Library Board, Friends of the Library Board and the library staff must focus on establishing a consistent and an increased level of funding.

OBJECTIVE 1: Generate cooperative partnerships with City, County Governments and other entities. The Library Director, Management Team, Library Staff and the Library Board will investigate new partnership opportunities within the City of Mobile and Mobile County Governments.

OBJECTIVE 2: Annually, the funds for the purchase of library materials within the Library System’s budget will increase by a factor at least equal to the appropriate elements of the Public Library Price Index as reported in the most recent Bowker Annual or will be equal to at least 15% of the Library’s Operational Budget.

OBJECTIVE 3: During this planning cycle, the total operating budget for the Library will increase annually by an amount greater than or at least equal to the Consumer Price Index for the Southeast Region.

OBJECTIVE 4: During this planning cycle, develop a Library Facilities Plan. The Library Director, Management Team, library staff and the community will be involved with creating a library system facilities plan. The Facilities Plan may also be completed as a portion of the City of Mobile and/or Mobile County’s Master Plans. The Facilities Plan should include new standalone Theodore Oaks and Parkway Branches and investigate the possibility of adding a new branch location in far west Mobile.

OBJECTIVE 5: During this planning cycle, investigate the possibility of hiring a social worker as a permanent library staff member to assist those library visitors with unique/specific needs.

OBJECTIVE 6: During this planning cycle increase the public relations funding at least equal to the Consumer Price Index for the Southeast Region which will allow library staff to disseminate and/or create marketing publications featuring the services offered by the Library.

OBJECTIVE 7: During this planning cycle, the Mobile Public Library will provide monthly Library Newsletters to library patrons.

ACTIVITIES:

- Meet with local government officials and other entities to generate cooperative partnerships.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Library Director, Public Relations Officer, Library Programming Coordinator, Management Team, Library Staff and the Library Board of Directors.

- Annually, review the Bowker Annual to determine if the Library System's budget is at least equal to the appropriate elements of the Public Library Price Index.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Library Director or Library Comptroller.

- During this planning cycle, advocate with local government officials to attempt to increase the total operating budget for the Library by an amount greater than or at least equal to the Consumer Price Index for the Southeast Region.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Library Director, Management Team, Library Staff and the Library Board of Trustees.

- By the end of the third year of this planning cycle issue an RFP to enlist the services of a Library Building Consultant to determine the space needs of all Library System facilities if this has not already been addressed by the City of Mobile and/or the Mobile County Master Plans.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Library Director, Management Team and the Library Board of Directors.

- During this planning cycle, investigate the possibility of hiring a social worker as a permanent library staff member to assist those library visitors with specific needs.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Library Director, Human Resources Officer and the Library Board of Trustees.

- Increase the public relations funding to allow library staff to disseminate and/or create "top notch" marketing publications of Library Services. Provide brochures, flyers and other print materials to entities outside the Library. Educate outside entities of our web/social media presence and generate press releases for the local and regional media as appropriate.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Public Relations Officer, Library Programming Coordinator, Library Web Development Coordinator and the Management Team.

- Disseminate the Mobile Public Library monthly Library Newsletters to library patrons.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Public Relations Officer or designee.

GOAL II:

Become the Preeminent Organization for Literacy and the Distribution of Information.

Library materials and library programs will support the development of the skills, interests, and passions necessary to succeed in life for patrons of all ages. The children of the City of Mobile and Mobile County will grow up in an environment that is rich in stories, literature, and reading material.

OBJECTIVE 1: The Library will increase its circulation of children's and adult materials by 3% by the end of this planning cycle.

OBJECTIVE 2: The Library will increase its facilities usage by children and adults by 3% by the end of this planning cycle.

OBJECTIVE 3: During this planning cycle, the Library System will have issued library cards to a minimum of 65% of the City/County residents served.

OBJECTIVE 4: The Library System will annually increase its programming attendance by 3%.

OBJECTIVE 5: The Mobile Public Library will provide the highest quality reading materials for the City of Mobile and Mobile County's children and adults. The Library will strive to enhance its specialty and digital collections. The Library collection will contain 100% of the titles listed annually in the ALA/ALSC Awards and Notables lists and the *New York Times* best seller lists.

OBJECTIVE 6: During this planning cycle, the Mobile Public Library will strive to receive increased funding to increase the hours of operation, including closing all Library Branches at 9 p.m. and opening at least two Library Branches on Sundays. In addition, the Library will make all services available to homebound patrons.

OBJECTIVE 7: The Mobile Public Library will disseminate and/or create "top notch" marketing publications of the Library's Services.

OBJECTIVE 8: During this planning cycle, the Mobile Public Library will be described or listed as one of the best things about the City of Mobile or Mobile County in at least three communities, regional or state-wide publications.

OBJECTIVE 9: During this planning cycle, the Mobile Public Library will continue to place an emphasis on digitizing the historical collections located in the Local History & Genealogy Library.

ACTIVITIES:

- Using the Integrated Library System, maintain and monitor monthly and annual circulation statistics to ensure we meet our objective to increase library materials circulation by 3%.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Library Director, Information Technology Manager, or designated Library Staff.
- Collect, maintain and monitor individual library entrance statistics to ensure we meet our objective to annually increase Library System facilities usage by children and adults by 3%.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Library Director, Information Technology Manager, or designated Library Staff.

- During this planning cycle, issue library cards to a minimum of 65% of the County residents. This may be accomplished by implementing a National Library Card Sign-up Month campaign each year, partnering with outside entities to schedule library card sign-up events and by visiting all schools in the county, ensuring every child has a library card.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Library Director, Information Technology Manager, or designated Library Staff.

- Collect, maintain and monitor individual library programming statistics to ensure we meet our objective of increasing Library programming attendance by 3% annually. In addition, strive to increase the number of STEM/STEAM programs offered by the Library and create a new Small Business/Job Resource Center. This may be accomplished by tapping into “local expertise” for programming, offering a minimum of 30 classes on Internet searching and/or the use of other Library’s electronic information sources. These classes may also be conducted as “one-on-one” instruction.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Library Director, Management Team or designated Library Staff.

- The Mobile Public Library will provide the highest quality of reading materials for the City of Mobile and Mobile County’s children and adults. The collection will contain 100% of the titles listed annually in the ALA/ALSC Awards and Notables lists and the *New York Times* best seller lists.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Library Director, Collection Development Manager, Management Team or designated Library Staff.

- During this planning cycle, the Library Director and members of the Library Board of Trustees will meet with the City Council and County Commissioners to discuss the need for increased funding to increase the hours of operation, including closing all Library Branches at 9 p.m. and opening at least two Library Branches on Sundays year round. In addition, the Library will make all services available to homebound patrons.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Library Director, Management Team and the Library Board of Trustees.

- The Mobile Public Library will disseminate and/or create “top notch” marketing publications of the Library’s Services. Provide brochures, flyers and other print materials to entities outside the Library. Educate outside entities of our web/social media presence and generate press releases for the local and regional media as appropriate.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Library Director, Public Relations Officer, Library Programming Coordinator, Web Development Coordinator and Management Team.

- To establish ongoing funding for the development and maintenance of library programs dedicated to enhancing the literacy of the City of Mobile and Mobile County’s youth.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Library Director, Management Team, Library Staff, Library Board of Trustees.

- The Mobile Public Library will develop and implement patron satisfaction surveys on at least a quarterly basis.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Director, Public Relations Officer, Information Technology Manager, Web Development Coordinator or designated Library Staff.
- During this planning cycle the Mobile Public Library will continue to place an emphasis on digitizing the historical collections located in the Local History & Genealogy Library.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Director, Local History & Genealogy Staff, Information Technology Manager, Web Development Coordinator or designated Library Staff.

What do you value most about the Library?

“That is open and available for everyone!!!!”

GOAL III:

All City of Mobile and Mobile County residents deserve to have the “best and brightest” Library employees assist them with school homework, reader’s advisory, technology education and to locate resources to help make life decisions. In addition, these skilled employees will offer educational and entertaining Library programming.

OBJECTIVE 1: The Library will answer at least 95% of reference questions to the satisfaction of its patrons.

OBJECTIVE 2: Library patrons will find at least 90% of the titles they search for are owned by Library.

OBJECTIVE 3: To ensure that library materials are available in a timely manner, the Technical Services Department including the Cataloging/Processing Division will make available to patrons 95% of all library materials within 15 days of receipt and all remaining library materials within 30 days of receipt.

OBJECTIVE 4: Provide on-going staff training and conference attendance opportunities for all Mobile Public Library employees.

OBJECTIVE 5: During this planning cycle, investigate the feasibility of adding additional full-time Young Adult Librarians at the Toulminville, Saraland, Parkway and Semmes Branch Libraries.

OBJECTIVE 6: During this planning cycle, investigate the feasibility of adding “notary services” at all Branch Libraries.

ACTIVITIES:

- The Library will answer at least 95% of reference questions to the satisfaction of its patrons. This performance will be measured by means of exit interviews/online surveys conducted during FY19 and again in FY21.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Director, Public Relations Officer, Information Technology Manager, Web Development Coordinator or designated Library Staff.
- Library patrons will find at least 90% of the titles they search for are owned by Library. This performance will be measured by means of exit interviews/online surveys conducted during FY19 and again in FY21.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Director, Public Relations Officer, Information Technology Manager, Web Development Coordinator or designated Library Staff.
- Ensure all library materials are available in a timely manner by the Technical Services Department including the Cataloging/Processing Division and making available to patrons 95% of all library materials within 15 days of receipt and all remaining library materials within 30 days of receipt. This may be accomplished by conducting a “systems analysis” of Technical Services current Acquisitions, Cataloging and Processing procedures.

- Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Library Director, Manager of Technical Services or designated Library Staff.
- Provide opportunities for Library employees to attend staff training, workshops, library and/or related conferences and participate in online training webinars.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Library Director, Management Team, Human Resource Officer, Designated Library Staff, Library Board of Trustees and Friends of the Library Board.
- During this planning cycle investigate the feasibility of adding additional full-time Young Adult Librarians for the Toulminville, Saraland, Parkway and Semmes Branch Libraries. Additional funding will be required as these would be new Library positions. In addition, a new job class and position description may have to be created.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Library Director, Human Resource Officer, Library Board of Trustees.
- During this planning cycle investigate the feasibility of adding “notary services” at all Branch Libraries.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Library Director, Library Board of Trustees or designated Library Staff.

What do you Value most About the Library?

“The ability to access books and materials I could never afford myself.”

GOAL IV:

Have state of the art technology in all buildings with personnel to support the services and equipment.

OBJECTIVE 1: During this planning cycle, the total operating budget for the Library Technology will increase annually by an amount greater than or at least equal to the Consumer Price Index for the Southeast Region.

OBJECTIVE 2: During this planning cycle, at least 1/3 of Library System computers will be replaced or upgraded. The Library Technology Plan states Library computers are on a three year replacement/upgrade schedule.

OBJECTIVE 3: During this planning cycle investigate the feasibility of re-wiring the internal connections within the Library Administrative Offices, Ben May Main Library, Toulminville Branch Library and the Moorer Branch Library.

OBJECTIVE 4: During this planning cycle, ensure the Library System has acquired/maintains the latest computer hardware/software available for libraries. Specifically, investigate the feasibility of implementing wireless printing, circulating wireless hotspots, tablets and the use of other emerging devices/technology.

OBJECTIVE 5: During this planning cycle investigate the feasibility of adding a Power Conditioning/Monitoring System to the Ben May Main Library and the Saraland Public Library.

ACTIVITIES:

- During this planning cycle, use the Consumer Price Index for the Southeast Region to calculate the inflation rate to ensure the Library System Technology Budget still has the same “purchasing power” as in the previous fiscal years.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Library Director, Information Technology Manager or designated Library Staff.
- During this planning cycle, plan to purchase/upgrade on an annual basis at least 1/3 of the Library System computers. Additional information is available in the Library System Technology Plan.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Library Director, Information Technology Manager or designated Library Staff.
- During this planning cycle investigate the feasibility of re-wiring the internal connections within the Library Administrative Offices, Ben May Main Library, Toulminville Branch Library and the Moorer Branch Library.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Library Director, Information Technology Manager or designated Library Staff.
- During this planning cycle, inventory and purchase Library System computer software to ensure the Library System has acquired/maintained the latest computer software available for libraries.

- Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Library Director, Information Technology Manager or designated Library Staff.
- During this planning cycle investigate the feasibility of adding a Power Conditioning/Monitoring System to the Ben May Main Library and the Saraland Public Library.
 - Responsibilities: Library Director, Assistant Library Director, Information Technology Manager or designated Library Staff.

What do you Value most About the Library?

“I live on Dauphin Island so I rely on the use of Cloud Library for my books. I value my tax dollars support such a worthy and valuable service for us. As an avid reader (usually at least 2 books a week) I simply can’t imagine not having access to a library.”

GOAL V:

Evaluate the Planning Documents annually to ensure documents reflect organization’s mission and operation.

Objective 1: Strategic Plan: During this planning cycle, the Mobile Public Library Strategic Plan will be evaluated annually and accomplishment of goals and activities will be reported to the Library Board of Trustees.

Objective 2: Technology Plan: During this planning cycle, the Mobile Public Library Technology Plan will be evaluated annually and accomplishment of goals and activities will be reported to the Library Board of Trustees.

Objective 3: Marketing Plan: During the first year of this planning cycle, a strategic Marketing Plan will be developed by the Library Director or designee. This plan will be evaluated annually and accomplishment of goals and activities will be reported to the Library Board of Trustees.

ACTIVITIES:

- Review goals and activities of the Library System Strategic Plan on an annual basis and report achievement of goals and completion of activities to the Library Board of Trustees.
 - Responsibilities: Library System Director and Management Team.
- Review goals and activities of the Library System Technology Plan on an annual basis and report achievement of goals and completion of activities to the Library Board of Trustees.
 - Responsibilities: Information Technology Manager and Library System Director.
- Develop a comprehensive Marketing Plan in the first year of this planning cycle and report accomplishments to the Library System Board of Directors on an annual basis.
 - Responsibilities: Library System Director, Public Relations Officer or designee.

How Could the Library Services be Improved, if at All?

“More people to help me find the information I need” *“Later hours”*

“Nothing, it is pretty awesome” *“Some of the smaller branches could be enlarged.”*

“Open Sunday hours” *“Some extend evening hours”* *“I like it the way it is”*

“Open Sundays year round” *“Update the bathrooms”*

“Extend hours. Open until 9p.m. during the week, including Fridays.”

“The library works well for me. Sunday afternoon hours for the branches would be nice.”