



STRATEGIC PLAN

ESTABLISHING A CENTER FOR
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2024-2026



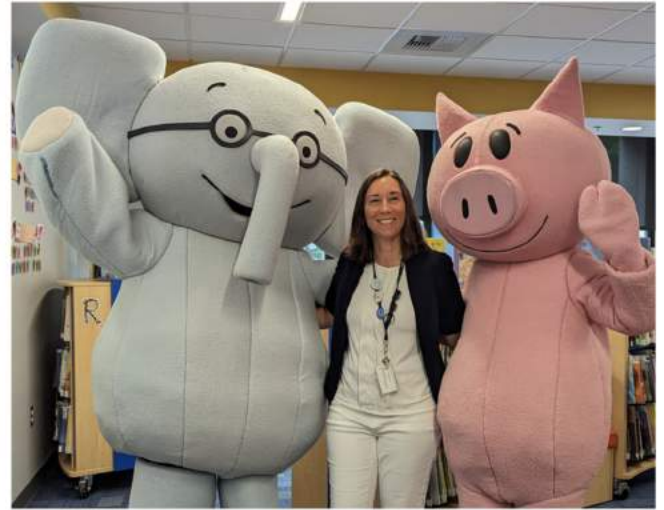
Letter from the Director

I'm delighted to present Upper Dublin Library's Strategic Plan: Establishing a Center for Community Engagement 2024–2026.

Since opening in 2020, our new Upper Dublin Library has amazed everyone who enters it. Our Adult Discovery & Learning series is unparalleled, our Children's Library is "the best in the world" (to quote an overheard parent), and more and more students, professionals, and seniors are making the UDPL their home-away-from-home every day. I have reveled in seeing all of the ways you have made the most of this exceptional community asset.

I'm equally eager to see where we are going. This strategic plan sets an ambitious, but exciting direction for us for the next three years. While we will continue to strive for excellence in our Core Services—staff, collections, and spaces—our leadership and staff will concentrate their efforts on achieving the three goals identified in this plan.

My sincere thanks to all of you who participated in our planning process this year. I found the focus group discussions, with kindergartners to retirees, and everyone in between, particularly enriching. I look forward to continuing our conversations in the future as we turn the page on this new chapter.



Cherilyn P. Fiory

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Director

Upper Dublin Public Library

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Our Identity

All are welcome to convene, collaborate, create...and connect at the Upper Dublin Library! Relocated to a state-of-the-art building in 2020 and designed to be Upper Dublin's center for community engagement, the award-winning UDPL is an inviting destination that connects visitors to books and other resources, to opportunities to learn and grow, and to each other. That's why our mission is:

*Connecting people and ideas
to educate, inspire
and strengthen the
Upper Dublin community.*



Core Service 1: Staff

Whether looking to research family history, find a child’s next favorite read, or get assistance with downloading free ebooks, we are ready to help! Available 7 days/65 hours/week, our friendly and knowledgeable staff are available to answer questions and provide direction with library services from multiple service points in the building as well as by phone and email.



Core Service 2: Collections

The emphasis of the UDPL’s collections is on acquiring books and other materials for wide-ranging ages and interests and offering choice of subjects, perspectives, and formats. From the latest bestsellers to children’s books at every reading level, library cardholders have free access to millions of books, movies, TV shows, audiobooks, and more.



Core Service 3: Spaces

We pride ourselves on providing comfortable and well-equipped spaces to study, meet, read, and play. The UDPL contains nine study rooms, multiple meeting rooms, an auditorium, cozy reading nooks, a preschool PlaySpace, and a computer lab. Plus we offer robust wifi, charging stations, and printing & scanning. Our spaces are designed for you!

2. Engaged Community

April 2023: Mailed surveys to 25% of randomly selected residences in Upper Dublin Township and opened online survey to the entire community.

May-June 2023: Led 9 Focus Group Discussions, including students in grades K-12 as well as those currently employed fulltime and those retired.

4. Drafted Goals & Objectives

September 2023: Members of the Library Board & Leadership Staff participated in a half-day retreat to review the community feedback and formulate draft goals.

6. Adopted Plan

January 17, 2024:
Library Board Meeting

1. Formed Strategic Planning Committee

January 2023: Composed of Library Staff & Board Members

3. Analyzed Feedback

Summer 2023: Collected and categorized responses from surveys and focus groups.

5. Shared Goals Internally

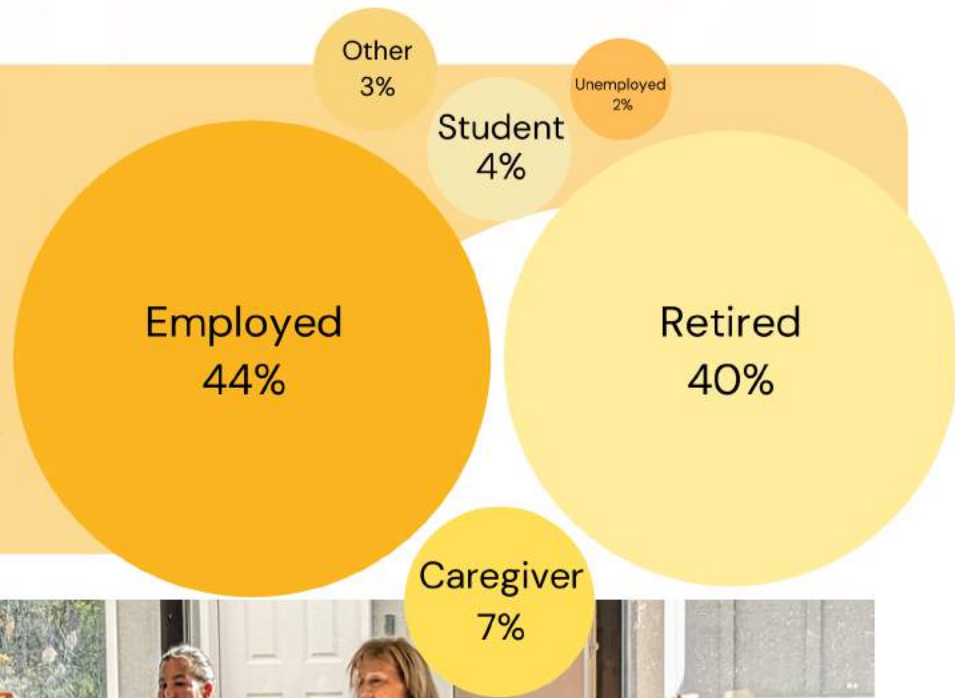
November-December 2023: Draft goals were shared with stakeholders, including Township Manager, Commissioners, Library Board, Friends of the Library, and staff.



Survey Demographics

Status Distribution

- 1,003 survey responses
- Over 80% of respondents were employed or retired
- About 50% of respondents work or attend class from home some or all of the time



75+ Years
14%

45-54 Years
15%

Under 24 Years
4%

65-74 Years
27%

35-44 Years
18%

25-34 Years
5%

55-64 Years
17%

- Fewer than 10% of respondents were under 35
- About 50% were between 35-65
- 40% were older than 65

Age Distribution

Library Usage



In which of the following ways have you and/or your family used the Library within the last three months?
Select all that apply.

Most Frequent Responses	Total
Checked out books	62%
Picked up an item on hold	52%
Searched the online catalog	42%
Read (a book, newspaper, etc.)	26%
Checked out a digital/online item	25%
Used free WIFI	25%



Leisure Interests



Of the following interests, select the top 5 that best define how you most spend your leisure time.

Most Frequent Responses	Total
Books/reading	80%
Spending time with family	69%
Exercising	56%
Watching TV/films	56%
Socializing with friends	52%
Food/dining out	49%



Library Service Priorities



Libraries serve communities in many ways. Which of the following ways most meets your needs, interests, and priorities?

Most Frequent Responses	Total
Community resources & services	55%
Lifelong learning	53%
Comfortable physical & virtual spaces	51%
Reading, viewing, & listening for pleasure	50%
Creating young readers	43%
Celebrating diversity & cultural awareness	29%



Photo by Mark Sirota

Survey Text Responses & Focus Groups – Strengths

SERVICES

- Pick-up window
- Open & roomy
- Auditorium
- Self-checkout
- Friends Shop
- Teen Lounge
- Study rooms
- Play space
- Quiet Reading Room
- Children's area on separate floor
- Meeting spaces
- STEAM room

PROCEDURES

- Helpful library staff
- Ease of reserving books
- Great weekly emails
- Organization of non-fiction books by neighborhood

PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS

- Book Clubs
- Adult Discovery & Learning
- Master Gardner
- Author Talks
- Outdoor concerts
- Teen Leadership Council
- Volunteer opportunities
- STEAM Lab
- Storytimes
- Scavenger hunt
- 1-2-3 Play with Me

COLLECTIONS

- Variety of books
- Diversity of books
- Libby & Hoopla apps
- Library of Things
- Museum passes
- Seed Library

Survey Text Responses & Focus Groups – Opportunities

SERVICES

- Weather protection at pick-up window
- Outdoor playground
- Better lighting in parking lot
- Electric car chargers
- Cafe or other food options
- Bike rack
- Reading area for tweens
- Community garden
- Game room

PROCEDURES

- Improve museum pass program
- Longer hours
- Import website calendar to personal calendars
- Coordinate with other libraries
- Better publicity
- Revisit organization of non-fiction books
- Better info on 3D Printing

PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS

- More evening book clubs, performance, lectures
- Walking Club
- Trivia nights
- Offer Adult Discovery & Learning virtually
- More after school teen programs
- Board game club
- More teen/family volunteer opportunities
- Evening/weekend kid activities

COLLECTIONS

- More copies of best-selling books
- More specialized books
- More diverse books
- Expand Library of Things
- Organize DVD collection by genre

What You Said



“

The new library seems forward thinking, especially with the seed library, the library of things, the kids play space, and the many classes and activities.

”

“

Keep doing everything you are doing—we are so grateful to live here with such a great library!

”



“

The library could offer more after school social engagement programming for kids, group study rooms, and other things to draw students there more and to consider the library a place to discover new passions.

”



What You Said

“

I'm always amazed by the wonderful programs at UD library. As someone who didn't grow up here, it's been so wonderful to feel connected to the UD community through the library. The children's programs are truly spectacular.

”



“

Continue to expand programs and events to attract the community and solidify the library as a critical centerpiece of Upper Dublin.

”

“

Provide more opportunities for senior citizens recently retired to share life experiences, volunteer.

”



Connecting People & Ideas



**Goal
#1**

Generations participate in rich, interactive learning opportunities that deepen their own understanding while inviting them to contribute to the collective learning experience of others.

Rationale

With Americans living longer, and social and economic changes having splintered traditional family structures, developing new opportunities for people to connect is vital. The benefits are endless—the ability to impart wisdom, build empathy, share similar interests, boost confidence, and find companionship. As an institution that welcomes people of all ages, the UDPL is uniquely positioned to nurture an environment ripe for fostering mutually-beneficial peer-to-peer and intergenerational relationships where all parties have something to contribute and gain.

The Work Ahead:

- Identify and develop new opportunities for learners to nurture their own curiosity and creativity, to collaborate, and to share their knowledge through hands-on activities at the UDPL and beyond.
- Transform the UDPL Creative Suite (UDPL STEAM Lab & Computer Lab) into an intergenerational community workspace that supports 21st-century learning.
- Evolve and enhance Adult Discovery & Learning to increase participation, reach new adults, and establish the UDPL as a center for lifelong learning.

Targeted Outcomes:

Improved knowledge and exposure to new ideas and resources; recognition for having shared meaningful information with others; involvement from multiple generations; increased visits & interactions with Library services & programs.



Goal #2



Readers of all ages discover books that enhance their literacy skills, expand their minds, and form the foundation for a lasting love of reading.

Rationale

Experts in education, science and medicine have clearly established that reading has a profound effect across generations. Young readers gain foundational learning and critical thinking skills while adults boost their memory and cognition health. For the youngest readers, it not only exposes them to advanced language skills, but shared reading with a trusted caregiver has the power to build lifelong bonds. Reading also expands our ability to interpret and analyze, and builds empathy and understanding. Reading can entertain, inspire and excite us, as well as help us relax and experience some relief from the stresses of every day life. With its vast resources, the UDPL is well-positioned to match people with books, authors, and reading experiences that inspire, educate, and satisfy them, personally and professionally.

The Work Ahead:

- Showcase library collections by optimizing opportunities for the community to share books, writers, and reading experiences.
- Develop and implement a plan to update & refresh library communications that highlight community reading & improve reader engagement.
- Develop library staff as book advocates and experts who will share their knowledge with each other and the community.

Targeted Outcomes:

Satisfaction with reading suggestions, improved reading skills, and, overall, greater delight in reading as a result of experiences with library collections, communications, and programs.



Goal #3



Our community comes together in a vibrant, accessible & inclusive Center for Community Engagement.

Rationale

Libraries are an essential part of the social infrastructure, critical to the health and wellbeing of our communities and a democratic society at large. By welcoming all people to convene, collaborate and create together, they provide the setting and context for social participation across generations. Reimagined as a Center for Community Engagement when it opened its new facility in 2020, the UDPL will continue to work towards this vision by growing its partnerships and exploring new opportunities to make the Library a destination where a sense of community is promoted and where everyone belongs.

The Work Ahead:

- Foster connections & dialogue, share resources, and enhance the cultural fabric of our community through partnerships with mission-aligned area organizations.
- Optimize the UDPL experience by developing plans for unfinished and underutilized indoor and outdoor public spaces.
- Identify barriers to accessing library services, and find solutions to reduce or remove them to ensure the UDPL is a welcoming place for everyone.

Targeted Outcomes:

Greater use of library meeting spaces; stronger & more collaborative partnerships; improved knowledge, exposure to new ideas and resources, and/or interest in taking an action; overall, increased visits & interactions with Library services & programs.



People are at the heart of this strategic plan, and there are many who deserve thanks for the role they played in its development. Our Strategic Planning Committee worked tirelessly throughout the year, developing the process, creating the survey tools, leading focus groups, analyzing the data, planning and facilitating the leadership retreat, and finally shaping and reshaping the goals until they clearly and accurately articulated our direction. Upper Dublin Library would like to thank the more than 1,100 community members who took the time to share their experiences, insights, and feedback with us throughout the year. We also thank all of our library staff who actively engaged in this planning process and who are prepared to embrace and implement the results in the coming years.

In particular, we wish to recognize the following individuals for their time and contributions:

UDPL Strategic Planning Committee

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Joan Ryder
Lauren Smyth

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Rebecca Lohoefer
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Friends of UDPL Board

Special thanks to Temple University Ambler for providing a comfortable and inspiring setting for our Leadership Retreat, September 19, 2023.



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to learn more about our
strategic priorities and the
specific initiatives we are taking
in support of them



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