

**MOBILE PUBLIC LIBRARY
STRATEGIC PLAN
2023 TO 2027**



Mobile Public Library
Five Year Strategic Plan
2023 to 2027

Mission

The Mobile Public Library's Mission is to Support Literacy and Connect our Community.

Mobile Public Library's Guiding Principles

- To be creative, proactive, and innovative in order to remain relevant.
- To entertain, inform and inspire.
- To enrich the lives of individuals in our community.
- To be a customer-driven organization that responds to the needs of our customers and the community.
- To utilize the library's resources in the most effective and efficient way in order to meet the needs and expectations of our customers.
- To strive to employ and harness cutting edge technology in order to deliver superior service to the public.
- To collaborate with families, community organizations, businesses, institutions, and groups in order to expand our service to and influence within the community.
- To market and promote the library's materials and services to the community at-large

Strategic Planning

Mobile Public Library celebrated 120 years of library service to the community in 2022. The system includes eleven library locations including the Ben May Main Library, and the Local History and Genealogy Division plus a Bookmobile. Like most other libraries, schools, businesses and institutions, the library was closed to the public for seven months for Covid 19 in 2020. However, the library continued to render virtual and curbside service to the citizens. The library is rapidly approaching pre-Covid 19 numbers in terms of service, attendance, programming and circulation of materials.

The library is now at the point of charting its future and developing a strategic plan for the year 2023-2027. The plan has been developed with input using a (1) strategic planning retreat for the management team, (2) a survey for patrons or the public, (3) a focus group of the library staff, and (4) a focus group of the library's board of directors. All of this input has led to the development of a plan that will allow the library to grow and further engage the citizens of Mobile and provide service to the community.

The patron survey resulted in the public defining the primary role of library in the Mobile community as a place to:

- Provide free public space for everyone
- Promote the value of life-long learning
- Provide access to technology
- Provide equal access to a diverse collection of materials in multiple formats

The staff identified staff development as one of the most critical needs in the system.

Our Role in the Community

The Mobile Public Library has had and continues to have a very positive response to each of the community needs:

Free Public Space

The Mobile Public Library is one of Mobile's most widely used and most accessible community resources. The library hosted 607,307 visitors last year and circulated 1,414,587 items. After purging and updating the database, the library has more than 154,580 cardholders.

Life Long Learning

The mission of the library is to support literacy and connect our community. The library has a direct impact on the community through participation in the Summer Library Celebration. Last year, over 7,000 patrons of all ages (children, teens, and adults) participated in the summer program. Over 880 book-lovers logged in more than 1 million minutes or 16,600 hours or just over 694 full days of reading for the program alone. The library hosted over 500 programs attracting more than 21,000 attendees. The library is the intersection between formal learning and informal learning.

Access to Technology

The library is one of the primary ways citizens are able to connect to the Internet and engage in other technologies. The usage count for the public Internet computers was 166,418. The annual count for wireless sessions was 24,474. Website visits totaled over 535,000. Mobile Public Library provides over 300 free computers to the public.

Diverse Collections

The library enriches the lives of individuals in the community by providing free materials to children, teens, and adults. The Mobile Public Library has a collection of over 500,000 print materials and 900,000 digital resources and is open to the public more than 27,000 hours annually. Digital or electronic resources are accessible 24-7.

Goals and Strategies

In addition to the goals set by the public or our customers, the library feels it is important to implement additional ideas. The goals for our Strategic Plan for 2023-2027 are to:

Goal 1: Provide free public space for everyone

- Maintain the current library locations by making changes that will improve the atmosphere, access, and enhance the customer experience
- Expand and improve service in at least two communities, the Dauphin Island Parkway area and Theodore area by re-locating and replacing these two library branches

Goal 2: Provide access to technology

- Enhance access to information and resources by expanding the use of technology
- Improve the user experience by providing equitable access to new or emerging technologies
- Maintain a plan for the consistent replacement of both public and staff computers by replacing at least one third of the machines annually until all are updated
- Support digitization, preservation, and increased access to electronic resources
- Develop and update a technology plan that includes the replacement of software programs, and peripherals
- Implement new technology and software programs related to STEAM and STEM

Goal 3: Promote the value of life-long learning

- Support and promote the development of resources and programs that support literacy and learning
- Partner with schools and community groups to support literacy and learning
- Promote training on new tools and technologies for all age groups
- Create a customer experience that fosters engagement with the resources and services offered

Goal 4: Provide equal access to a diverse collection of quality materials in multiple formats

- Expand collections of materials for an inclusive and diverse community
- Monitor the selection process to insure that the library has a diverse Inclusive collection of materials that represent various cultures, points of view, and formats
- Continue to expend a minimum fifteen percent of the budget on materials

Goal 5: Heightened Focus on Promoting Early Literacy Initiatives

- Increase early literacy programs to reach families in our service area
- Heavily market **1000 Books Before Kindergarten** to families and daycare centers
- Develop an “action packet” for marketing Early Literacy Initiatives to families
- Support student success through programs and partnerships with families, community agencies, and programs
- Reduce barriers to student resources by partnering with the Mobile County Public School System to issue library cards to students and promote library services

Goal 6: Contribute to the Region’s Economic Growth

- Partner with other job-seeking and small business centers to expand the Mobile Public Library’s *Connection Center* services
- Establish a Connection Center at the West Regional and Toulminville locations
- Offer programs and support job-seeking and non-traditional pathways to employment and career development
- Increase programming with local government and community organizations to deliver information services related to citizens’ basic needs including housing, food assistance, transportation, and medical needs, and civic needs including voting registration
- Investigate the possibility to collaborating with a state or local agency (Alabama Department of Human Resources, etc.) to provide a social worker to assist library patrons/visitors with any unique and specific needs
- Partner and participate in selective networking events of the local Chamber, Black Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, and the Downtown Alliance that expands the library’s visibility within the business community

Goal 7: Equity Diversity, and Inclusion

- Train and support staff on integrated EDI within the organization
- Nurture a culture of inclusion and respect for patrons and staff
- Increase programming that promotes civic dialogue
- Form a staff EDI Committee
- Strategically develop programs celebrating diversity

Goal 8: Market the library in multiple ways to inform the public about library services

- Increase spending on public relations and marketing of the library's resources and services
- Increase the library's presence through social media, radio, television, and print advertising
- Provide a quality newsletter documenting and promoting the activities of the library
- Produce quality brochures, flyers, banners, and other print materials for the public

Goal 9: Increase Funding for the Library

- Maintain a positive relationship with the library's major stakeholders or funding sources including the City of Mobile, Mobile County Government, Alabama Public Library Service, and other grant and government sources
- Continue to advocate for an increased level of funding from the City of Mobile to support the library's collections, programming, staffing, and technology
- Advocate for reimbursement for the recently added employee insurance initiative
- Pursue grant opportunities that support programs, activities, and collections

Goal 10: Valuing and Empowering Employees

- Create a position of Training Officer
- Recognize and encourage opportunities for training for staff development
- Implement programs that prepare staff for administrative and leadership roles
- Implement a staff mentoring program
- Ensure the staff receive equitable pay
- Implement a more meaningful annual review process (stay interviews)
- Develop an onboarding process for new staff to establish familiarity with all branches and areas of the library

Goal 11: Implement a Library Expansion Program

- Develop a preliminary plan for the relocation and opening of a new Dauphin Island Parkway Branch
- Develop a preliminary plan for the establishment of at least two new branches to serve neighborhoods in Theodore and further out in West Mobile
- Form a capital campaign committee to raise funds for the library's expansion program

Management Team

Margie Calhoun – Library Director
Robert Hyde – Comptroller
Carla Garmon-Robinson – Human Resources Officer
Grace Smith – Purchasing/Facilities
Valerie Longa – Public Relations Officer
Marian Ponder – Special Events Coordinator
Lori Boyer – Media Marketing Specialist
Geraldine Wells – Branch Libraries Supervisor
Chris Cox – Circulation Services
Lucy Coleman – Ben May Main Library
Cherold Rhodes – Ben May Youth Services
Lisa Barnes – Ben May Adult Services
Elizabeth Theris - Local History & Genealogy
Alessondri Gallanti – Saraland Public Library
Emmie Powell – Youth Services
Winifred Lucy Moorer Branch Library
Frank Tigner – Moorer Branch Library
David Ori – Theodore Oaks Library
Betty Kidd – Virginia Dillard Smith Library
Veronica McCoo – Grand Bay Library
Heather Williams – Semmes Branch Library
Erin English – Bookmobile
Fran Siemssen – Technical Services
Carly Akers – Technical Services
Michelle Eli – Technical Services
Shane Johnson – Information Technology
Stafford Jackson – Information Technology

Mobile Public Library Staff

Dimitri Tate- Parkway Branch Library
Zoe Jackson – Ben May Main Library
Mary Powe – Theodore Oaks Library
Lynn Zimmerman- West Regional Library
Linda Wells – Virginia Dillard Smith Library
Vonceile Riley – Monte L. Moorer Branch
David Roberts – West Regional Library
Callie Kelley – Semmes Regional Library
Graham Ritchie – Information & Technology
Fatims Dupree – Grand Bay Library
Barbara Dollison Technical Services Department
Regenia Cook – West Regional Library
Cherold Rhodes – Ben May Main Library

Mobile Public Library Board

Harris Oswald, Jr. – Library Board Chair
Sandra Wiley – Library Board Treasurer
John Browning – Board Member
Brenda Jackson – Board Member
Rebecca Williams – Board Member
George Hunter – Board Member
Catherine Pierce – Board Member

Strategic Plan Coordinators

Carly Akers
Lori Boyer
Valerie Longa
Margie Calhoun, Library Director