

Strategic Plan for Siloam Springs Public Library Prepared by Sarah Davis

Monday, May 8, 2017



(<https://www.aiaa.org/awards/entries/detail/siloam-springs-public-library/>)

A. Name and Location of Library

Siloam Springs Public Library

205 E. Jefferson

Siloam Springs, AR 72761

<http://www.siloamsprings.com/155/Library>

B. Mission and Vision Statements

Current Mission Statement for the Siloam Springs Public Library

Our mission is to provide services and materials for all residents in Northwest Arkansas and Northeast Oklahoma for personal enrichment, enjoyment, and educational/informational needs in a welcoming, convenient and responsive manner. We especially recognize our responsibility to encourage children to develop an ongoing interest in learning, as well as a lifelong joy of reading. (<http://www.siloamsprings.com/157/From-Your-Librarian>)

Proposed Vision Statement

Our vision is to remain an essential partner of the Siloam Springs community by continuing our tradition of excellent library service while seeking out new and innovative ways of serving our community in a digital age.

C. Period of Time That This Strategic Plan Will Cover

3 years: September 2017-August 2020

D. Planning Methodology

In celebration of the one-year anniversary of the Grand Opening of our new library building, the SSPL wants to look towards the future and create a strategic plan for the next three years spanning from September 2017 to August 2020. Great progress has been made at SSPL over the past few years, especially considering our new building. A recent press release about the anniversary said:

Patron visits have increase[d] 59%, program attendance is up 61%, item check outs increased 31% and computer use is up 45%. Staff has also increased the amount of programming 46% by adding a bi-lingual program, more teen programing and an additional adult reading group. ...The (three-times larger than previous space) Siloam Springs Public Library includes a teen area, a children's area and reading room, six study/work rooms, expansive main floor area for adult reading, a cozy nook for periodicals and reference materials plus a wing dedicated to public use. This public use area holds two rooms that can hold 100 and 50 respectively, but can also be combined to host larger meetings. The nonprofit group the Friends of the Library also has its own store in the public wing of the building. Outside you can enjoy the back balcony overlooking downtown or the west patio featuring a gas fireplace. (Siloam Springs Public Library)

To make effective use of this new space, we need a strategic plan to continue our momentum.

The Siloam Springs Public Library last made a strategic plan as part of the Forward Siloam Springs 2030 Comprehensive Plan. The planning process for that project took place in 2007 and the plan was formalized in February 2008. All four library goals have been

successfully implemented, as most of those goals related to the construction of the new library building that was completed in 2016.

The process for the whole city was thorough, in-depth, and valuable. However, SSPL does not want to wait for another comprehensive plan to set strategic goals for the near future. While we set new strategic goals, we keep in mind the Forward Siloam Springs 2030 Comprehensive Plan and the strategic and master plans of relevant Siloam Springs organizations. We also consider the changes that have occurred in Siloam Springs and the United States over the past decade. Our new building is a result of many years of work and planning and it deserves a fresh set of goals to ensure its sustainability and effectiveness for the community. While we could not follow the same intense process the whole City of Siloam Springs used in 2007, we followed it in spirit by seeking the input of our local community and of our Friends of the Siloam Springs Library organization (<http://www.siloamlibraryfriends.org/>).

Internally, SSPL staff began with a SWOT analysis, asking for input from each staff member on each of the four components: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This information received from frontline staff was invaluable for the process. It introduced new ideas as well as confirmed what strategies were currently working for our library.

Next, we scheduled a presentation at the meeting of the Friends of the Siloam Springs Library. We introduced them to the SWOT analysis process and asked for their input as invested partners of the SSPL. We reminded them that while every idea introduced would not be included in the final list of goals, all ideas and suggestions would be saved for future consideration. The Friends enjoyed this process and contributed interesting feedback from their unique perspective.

Next, we scheduled a public meeting for the Siloam Springs community to give feedback on their ideas for the public library. This meeting was advertised in many locations, including places to attempt to attract non-library users to the meeting. These public meetings were guided with four questions from the Massachusetts Library System's Strategic Planning for Libraries Guide, with some necessary edits for our community:

- What do you like most about the Siloam Springs Library?
- What improvements would you like to see to the Siloam Springs Public Library?
- Think about the library and Siloam Springs community of the future. If money were no object, tell us about your ideal library system here in Siloam Springs.
- What services and programs do you see the Siloam Springs Public Library needing to focus on for the next five years?

In order to prepare the library-going public for the meeting, posters with these questions were hung in the SSPL. Customers were invited to write their own responses so that we could catch the opinions of everyday users who may not have been able to attend the meeting. The questions were also included on informational flyers about the meeting.

At the meeting, we informed the audience that we would voice record the meeting in order to preserve all ideas. We also introduced the "Brainstorming Rules" from the Massachusetts Library System as a guide for the meeting. Paper surveys with the questions as well as free space were available for anyone who did not want to be recorded or who had more ideas beyond the questions provided. The audience had many interesting ideas, some of which staff and Friends had not considered. While all were not feasible, obtaining their perspective on our work was essential.

These two SWOT stages and feedback from the public meeting afforded us with many ideas, suggestions, and questions for our strategic planning process. Even though it came close to becoming an information overload, the process and the information obtained from it gave us fresh insight into the areas where we need to focus our strategic plan. One gap noted in our process is how to seek input from non-library users beyond strategically placed flyers; this gap will be addressed as part of our goals for outreach.

E. Assessment of User Needs

For a description of the Siloam Springs community, we add the following portion from the Forward Siloam Springs 2030 Comprehensive Plan. While the Siloam Springs community has changed in some ways with the passage of time since the approval of the Comprehensive Plan, the broad strokes of Siloam Springs remains the same.

Siloam Springs retains an abundant amount of natural beauty within its City limits and planning area. One of the most treasured natural features is Sager Creek, which flows through the historic downtown area. It is a destination spot for the community during all seasons. There are also many festivals, craft fairs, and live entertainment shows in Twin Springs Park and City Park throughout the year, the principal of which is the Dogwood Festival. The City is also rich in parks including the City Park, Bob Henry Park and the Twin Springs Park, which houses the historic Twin Springs Fountain.

...The City maintains approximately six miles of lighted multi-use trail, which extends from La-ZBoy Park to the JBU campus and beyond. This element is a major draw for new residents seeking active outdoor lifestyles. Other natural features include the Siloam

Springs Lake (referred to as City Lake) which is fed by Flint Creek and provides fishing areas to the public. These natural features should be reflected in the character of the City as a whole as new development occurs within the City and its outlying areas.

Additional community attributes that contribute to a viable and desirable quality of life include:

- Small town ambience that retains a neighborly and friendly atmosphere and charm.
- A university influence that contributes to the areas intellectual capital as well as expanded

cultural activities and a high paying, stable economic base.

- Outdoor recreational settings through Ozark National Forest and City Lake.
- A diversified economy through the presence of several different kinds of major

industries

requiring a skilled and diverse workforce.

- Regional access to major trade centers such as the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers area

and

Tulsa, Oklahoma.

- A strong sense of civic pride, community involvement, and volunteerism through

multiple civic

organizations and special events. (Forward 2030, 16)

The Forward Siloam Springs 2030 Comprehensive Plan also included information about Siloam Springs economic growth, which is relevant to the economic stability of the SSPL:

Siloam Springs has grown primarily as a bedroom community. Job growth remains steady at 6.6 percent, however housing growth has outpaced local job creation by 1.1 percent, implying that a percentage of new residents work elsewhere in the County or in Oklahoma. Approximately 17.8 percent of all Siloam Springs workers reside in Oklahoma or elsewhere in Benton County and 44 percent of the employees of the top major industries reside in Oklahoma. Although technically not in Oklahoma, Siloam Springs is the largest city and employment base that services the northeastern Oklahoma region. As the regional economy continues to expand and create new jobs, Siloam Springs' housing growth will continue to follow suite. Other growth factors include West Siloam Springs, Oklahoma, Cherokee Casino, and the continued expansion of local industries and JBU. The three percent unemployment rate in the County remains well below the national unemployment average. (Forward Siloam Springs, 15)

Some updates since that time can be found in the recent plans from John Brown University and Main Street Siloam. John Brown University describes some of the changes that Siloam Springs has made in the years since the approval of the Forward Siloam Springs Plan, even mentioning our new building which was in progress at the time JBU's plan was written:

Siloam Springs has also grown in ways that have been good for JBU. Main Street Siloam Springs has done a wonderful job of encouraging revitalization in the downtown with new restaurants, coffee shops, and boutique stores added in the last five years. A new hospital, new high school, and, soon to be, new public library and possibly new city museum also greatly enhance the quality of life in this community. There is a dynamic

and cooperative “town and gown” relationship between the City of Siloam Springs and JBU, which benefits everyone. (JBU Strategic Plan 2015-2020, 7)

We love being part of such a vibrant and revitalized community here in Siloam Springs.

The opening of the new location of SSPL was one of the pieces of the Main Street Siloam Master Plan. The next step for SSPL as part of the Main Street Siloam Master Plan, in conjunction with the 2015-2016 City of Siloam Springs Goals, is supporting the development of the area near the new location, currently being called “Medical Springs Park.” This space is envisioned as a community area, “including a splash pad, amphitheater, permanent home for the farmers’ market, green space, and more”

(<http://www.siloamsprings.com/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=204>). The SSPL will have input into this area and plans to use it to spark programming ideas and partnerships.

One gap in our assessment of our user area and their needs is from people or organizations that do not fall neatly into the City of Siloam, JBU or Main Street Siloam profile. More research needs to be done on these populations, that could include, for example, people who live in the outskirts of Siloam Springs, immigrant populations, and anyone else who is part of a group who does not regularly use the library. The resources from Massachusetts Library System that offer a comprehensive plan for reaching these kinds of population are helpful in considering this kind of outreach and will be suggested to the City of Siloam Springs for the next round of city strategic planning (Community-Led Libraries Toolkit, A Step-By-Step Guide to 'Turning Outward' to Your Community, Conducting a Community Assessment).

The Siloam Springs Public Library currently offers a number of regular programs and services for its customers. These include:

- Circulating Physical Collection
- 24/7 Digital collection, including [Polaris](#) catalog, [Library2Go](#), [Zino](#), and [Traveler Access](#)
- Computers (28), Printing, Meeting Rooms
- Children’s Programming: Weekly Afterschool Program, Weekly Homeschool Program, Twice Weekly Preschool Storytime, Weekly Bilingual Storytime
- Teen Programming: Weekly Movie Nights
- Adult Programming: Book clubs, Reading Groups, author events, Ask the Librarian service
- Family Programming: Weekly Movie Nights
- Summer Reading Programming
- Other: Facebook page, occasional newsletter

Current programming and services are well-received, yet we are always looking for the best ways to serve our community.

Because our staff and library is small, we have created small, reasonable goals for the next three years. We plan to revisit the goals quarterly to evaluate our progress and check to see if any ideas from our data gathered from staff, Friends, and the public are able to begin testing. We want to keep our goals reasonable and manageable for the near future, especially when we consider that the City of Siloam Springs will consider updating the Forward Siloam Springs 2030 Comprehensive Plan in the next few years.

F. Multi-year Goals, Objectives, and Actions

1. Broad Category: Programming

Specific Goal: To provide excellent programming for all ages in the Siloam Springs community

Objective: To maintain increased recently programming levels and increase incrementally

- a. Action 1: Monitor and record attendance at every SSPL program
- b. Action 2: Analyze program attendance quarterly by comparing months, times of day, and ages targeted, and other categories that arise

Objective: To determine programming needs for all ages

- i. Action 1: Use simple PLA quarterly surveys at selected programs to assess user interest and potential new program ideas
- ii. Action 2: Participate in City of Siloam Springs/Main Street Siloam planning process for Medical Springs Park
- iii. Action 3: Create list with staff of programming ideas based on surveys and suggestions
- iv. Pilot new programming or adapted current programming beginning in September 2018

2. Broad Category: Outreach

Specific Goal: To broaden the reach of the SSPL to serve new groups and populations

Objective: To assess gaps in our outreach for non-library users

- a. Action 1: Director and Assistant Director read Community-Led Libraries Toolkit, A Step-By-Step Guide to 'Turning Outward' to Your Community, Conducting a Community Assessment from Massachusetts Library System

- b. Action 2: Director writes a report with relevant conclusions from these resources.
 - c. Action 3: By September 2018, create a library survey to be distributed to new audiences learned about in meetings from Action 1.
 - d. Action 4: By January 2019, distribute the survey.
 - e. Action 5: By May 2019, evaluate the survey results.
3. Broad Category: Technology

Specific Goal: To keep the SSPL informed and up to date about changes in technology and digital resources

Objective: Maintain current technologies and increase opportunities incrementally

- a. Action 1: Continue with current grant-writing projects
- b. Action 2: Communicate with Friends about current needs and future trends quarterly
- c. Action 3: Attend one (or more as opportunities arise) virtual conference per year about technology (ex: Library 2.017 virtual conference)
- d. Action 4: Write a report about virtual conference
- e. Action 5: Explore possibility of surveying SSPL users about technology interests

G. Authorized Party to Approve the Strategic Plan

Dolores Deuel, Siloam Springs Library Director

List of Resources Consulted

Arkansas Chapter of the Institute of Architects. 2016. "Design Award Entry: Siloam Springs Public

Library." Accessed May 6, 2017.

<https://www.aiaar.org/awards/entries/detail/siloam-springs-public-library/>.

City of Siloam Springs Community Development Department Staff and Planning Staff from Northwest

Arkansas Regional Planning Commission. 2008. "Forward Siloam Springs: The Siloam Springs 2030 Comprehensive Plan." City of Siloam Springs. Accessed May 6, 2017.

<http://www.siloamsprings.com/documentcenter/view/35>.

City of Siloam Springs Board of Directors. 2015. "2015-2016 Goals." City of Siloam Springs.
Accessed May 6, 2017. <http://www.siloamsprings.com/DocumentCenter/View/1238>.

City of Siloam Springs. "Library Celebrates One Year Anniversary." Accessed May 6, 2017.
<http://www.siloamsprings.com/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=194>.

City of Siloam Springs. "Public Invited to Give Input on 'Medical Springs Park.'" Accessed May
6,
2017. <http://www.siloamsprings.com/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=204>

Evans, G. Edward and Camila A. Alire. 2013. *Management Basics for Information
Professionals*.

Chicago: Neal Schuman.

Friends of the Siloam Springs Library. 2017. Accessed May 6, 2017.
<http://www.siloamlibraryfriends.org/>.

John Brown University. 2015. "JBU Strategic Plan 2015-2020." Accessed May 6, 2017.
<https://www.jbu.edu/assets/president/resource/file/Strategic-Plan-2015-2019.pdf>.

Massachusetts Library System. 2017. "Strategic Planning for Libraries." Last modified April 25,
2017.
Accessed May 6, 2017. <http://guides.masslibsystem.org/strategicplanning>.

Massachusetts Library System. 2017. "Brainstorming Rules." Accessed May 6, 2017.
http://guides.masslibsystem.org/ld.php?content_id=25623881.

Main Street Siloam Springs. 2014. "Siloam Springs Downtown and Connectivity Master Plan."

Accessed May 6, 2017.

http://mainstreetsiloam.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Siloam-Springs-Downtown-and-Connectivity-Plan_July-28-2014_low-res-for-web-only.pdf.

Siloam Springs Public Library. 2017. "From Your Librarian." Accessed May 6, 2017.

<http://www.siloamsprings.com/157/From-Your-Librarian>.

Appendix 1

From Pages 92-93 of the Forward Siloam Springs 2030 Comprehensive Plan

<http://www.siloamsprings.com/documentcenter/view/35>

4.1.2 Goals

The Siloam Springs Public Library desires to be a safe and accessible facility with a welcoming atmosphere that provides the residents of Northwest Arkansas and Northeast Oklahoma with the latest in information technology. The library also desires to be a gathering place for recreational use, leisure activities, and educational programs in order to inform and inspire lifelong learning and reading. In order to achieve these desires, there is need for the library to expand, as patronage has increased within the last 30 years. The following have been identified as goals for this facility:

Goal # 1—Move/ expand to a new location.

Goal # 2—Construct a new library.

Goal # 3—Make programs/ activities available to all ages.

Goal # 4—Keep technology updated.

4.1.3 Objectives

Goal # 1 (Expand to a new location.)

- Objective A—Purchase land for a facility.

Goal # 2 (Construct a new library.)

- Objective A—Design the new facility.
- Objective B—Promote fundraising projects.
- Objective C—Pursue grant writing projects.
- Objective D—Run a public awareness campaign.

Goal # 3 (Make programs/activities available to all ages.)

- Objective A—Conduct fundraising/ grant writing to hire staff to lead programs and activities.

- Objective B—Pursue media advertising.

Goal # 4 (Update technology.)

- Objective A—Pursue grant writing projects.

- Objective B—Promote fundraising projects.

- Objective C—Attend conferences / keep updated on the latest technology.

4.1.4 Policy

- Locate available land to move to new location.

- Work in partnership with an architect to design the facility.

- Work in partnership with the Friends of the Library for fundraising projects.

- Create a steering committee to manage the development of the new facility.

- Create an ongoing grant writing committee to help locate possible funding for the new facility and support for additional programming and technology updating.