

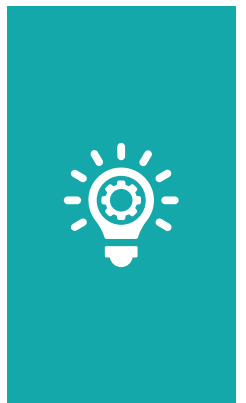
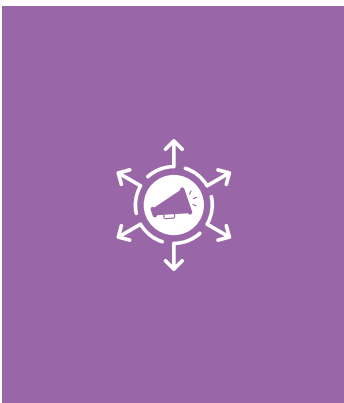
FREMONT

public library

engage the community • inspire creativity • enrich minds

STRATEGIC PLAN

CONNECTED FUTURES



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Introduction

Dear Fremont Public Library Community,

I am excited to share with you the Fremont Public Library's new Strategic Plan: **Connected Futures**.

This plan is the result of thoughtful engagement with our community over the past several months. More than 600 residents, staff members, and local leaders contributed their voices, ideas, and hopes for the future of our library through focus groups and surveys. Their input helped shape a vision that both looks to the future and respects the values and current needs of the Fremont Public Library.

At its heart, this plan reflects our commitment to being more than a building with books. We are a place of connection, creativity, and learning. Whether through expanded outreach, inclusive programming, or innovative services, our goal is to meet people where they are and ensure everyone feels welcome, supported, and inspired.

We are especially excited to strengthen our role as a community hub by offering more arts and cultural events, deeper partnerships with schools and local organizations, and flexible service models that bring the library into neighborhoods, community events, and gathering spaces. We also recognize the importance of investing in technology, staff development, and infrastructure to ensure we remain responsive and resilient in a changing world.

As we move forward, we remain guided by the belief that libraries are essential to thriving communities. I invite you to explore this plan, share your thoughts, and join us in building a future where the Fremont Public Library continues to be a place of inspiration, inclusion, and opportunity for all.

Warm regards,

Laura Long | Director, Fremont Public Library



Purpose

The Fremont Public Library exists to engage the community, inspire creativity, and enrich minds.



Community-Centered Research

To reflect the priorities of the entire Fremont Public Library District's (FPLD) population and enhance the library's role as a marketplace of ideas strategic planners engaged more than 600 community members using multiple strategies:



RESIDENT PROFILES

LibraryIQ created data-driven demographic profiles and patron maps, providing a deep understanding of residents - both library patrons and non-users.



FOCUSED CONVERSATIONS + PUBLIC MEETINGS

Facilitators spoke with more than 100 staff, community leaders, and residents. These meaningful conversations focused on hopes for the Fremont District and for library services.



WEBSITE FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

A public survey, available online and in person, gathered more than 500 responses and provided broad insight into community needs and interests. The website also gathered residents' "Big Ideas" for the Library.



STAFF ENGAGEMENT

FPLD staff contributed their deep expertise in aligning the Library's mission and capacities with community priorities.

CONNECTED FUTURES is rooted in data. National best practices, local demographics, growth projections, economic and social climate, facility use, and program engagement were also part of the analysis. Data sources include:

- Illinois State Library information and statistics
- LibraryIQ collection data analytics
- LibraryIQ recommendations based on consumer segmentation data
- United States Census

What We Learned

The Fremont Public Library's service area is a thriving community, with a median household income of about \$110,000 and nearly half of adults holding a bachelor's degree or higher. The population is aging: 23% of residents are 65 or older and the median age is 47. While 18% of residents are under 18, the community is not overwhelmingly young. Language diversity is another important factor—71% of households speak English at home, while about 28% speak another language, most commonly Spanish or Asian languages.

Survey and focus group feedback demonstrate that FPLD is well-regarded and widely used. Most survey respondents were older adults, underscoring the importance of continuing to serve this core audience. Patrons expressed high satisfaction with collections, convenience, and customer service, but wanted more opportunities for arts and cultural programs, life skills classes, and spaces for community gathering. Barriers to use included

reliance on home technology, desire for more program variety and times, and lack of awareness of services. Outreach efforts, like Story Strolls, pop-up events, and participation in community festivals, are growing, but there is demand for a more coordinated, proactive outreach approach that can connect with non-users, seniors, and underserved neighborhoods.

Input from staff and community leaders added another layer of insight. Staff asked for more training in working with seniors, unhoused individuals, and neurodiverse patrons. Managers saw opportunities to expand services through alternative library locations, mobile units, and deeper literacy support. Community partners—including schools, nonprofits, and local government—praised FPLD as a trusted institution and encouraged it to expand its role by hosting services like GED, legal aid, and small business programs. Teens and seniors also voiced specific needs, such as separate gaming and study areas, DIY workshops, and social programs to reduce isolation. Technology access and digital skills are increasingly central to FPLD's role. The library provides 67 mobile hotspots, laptop lending, wireless printing, and technology troubleshooting, alongside a strong and growing digital collection. However, there are still opportunities for increases in cybersecurity, technology and device help for seniors, and more staff training.

What This Means for FPLD

- Demographic factors point to growing needs for senior services, technology and digital literacy support, culturally inclusive materials, and high-quality, intellectually engaging programs such as author talks and STEM activities.
- FPLD is encouraged to lean into its role as a community gathering place and provide specific amenities for seniors, teens, and young children.
- Patrons, especially seniors, want more arts and culture events and space for community gathering.
- Expanding cybersecurity protections, training staff, diversifying IT support, and investing in infrastructure are important for operational sustainability.
- The stable economy and independent taxing district give FPLD flexibility to innovate, expand outreach, and plan capital projects while continuing to demonstrate fiscal responsibility.
- To maximize its impact, the library should:
 - Expand outreach beyond building walls.
 - Continue to focus on building awareness of library services.
 - Strengthen technology infrastructure and cybersecurity.
 - Plan for flexible service models such as mobile units or converted retail spaces.
 - Strengthen its role as an educational partner.

Fremont Public Library Strategic Goals

1



CONNECT THE COMMUNITY

FPLD has a strong foundation of community-inspired initiatives, entertaining and informative events for seniors, high-quality storytimes, and carefully selected collections.

To deepen this commitment, FPLD will offer more events directly shaped by local interests and tailored to local residents. FPLD will also strengthen its role as a community partner by collaborating with schools, agencies and nonprofits to deliver services where they're most needed. Library collections will be enhanced to further reflect community identity. The library will be an even more welcoming place where residents gather and everyone feels valued, welcome, and included.

The Fremont Public Library will foster meaningful connections through strong partnerships and creating programs and experiences that bring people together.

Strategies

- Strengthen partnerships for greater impact
- Expand outreach beyond the building
- Foster inclusive belonging
- Leverage the library building as a community hub
- Promote arts, culture, and shared experiences
- Enhance communication and visibility

Examples of What You'll See

- Collaborations with schools to align literacy and summer programs.
- Enhanced partnerships with community organizations such as schools, cultural organizations, parks, etc.
- Pop-up services at senior centers, public buildings, and festivals
- Outreach lockers or a mobile unit bringing holds and programs to neighborhoods.
- Bilingual storytimes and cultural holiday celebrations
- Diverse community-led programs
- Resource fairs with social service agencies and small business workshops
- More cross-promotions with partner organizations
- Local art exhibits, storytelling, concerts, or theater bus trips
- Multigenerational programs that bring residents of all ages together for shared experiences

2



EXPAND OUTREACH AND ACCESS

The Fremont Public Library offers all kinds of helpful services that make life a little easier and a lot more interesting. From storytimes for preschoolers to Crafternoons for seniors as well as a variety of study spaces, free Wi-Fi, Library of Things, and downloadable books and movies, there's something for everyone. But not everyone is able to visit or knows just how much the library has to offer. That's why offering services outside the building and developing more awareness in the community is so important. When more people can access library services, more people can benefit, and the library can keep growing as a welcoming, useful, and inspiring place.

FPLD will focus on outreach and building awareness across the community. That means meeting people where they are—at schools, community events, and other local gathering spots—so everyone has a chance to discover all the ways they can use the library.

The Fremont Public Library will make it easier to access library service and engage existing and new patrons.

Strategies

- Make accessing library services easier for all residents.
- Raise awareness of the library and its services.
- Create awareness of the value of library services.
- Expand opportunities for outreach and community engagement.

Examples of What You'll See

- Plenty of communication to increase public awareness of the library as a place for community connection, technology, fun, and learning.
- More public awareness of the digital collection's value and convenience
- More library participation in school and community events
- Increased promotion of library services to students and families through school communications
- More "library of things" items and opportunities to try technology devices in the library.

3



INNOVATE OPERATIONS

FPLD stands ready to lead by embracing innovative operational strategies that boost both efficiency and service quality. Leveraging best practices alongside data-driven insights, the library will continuously adapt its collections, outreach efforts, and programs to align with the shifting needs of the community. Through sustained investment in cutting-edge tools, resources, and workplace enhancements, library access will become more flexible and inclusive—welcoming everyone, no matter their location, needs, or circumstances.

Internally, the Library will prioritize leadership development and encourage staff at all levels to adapt, cross train, take initiative, and contribute to service innovation. By building a culture of forward-thinking adaptability, FPLD will continue to evolve as a responsive and dynamic resource.

The Fremont Public Library will maintain and strengthen organizational operations to support lifelong learning and embrace innovation.

Strategies

- Analyze library workflow and service models for efficiency and effectiveness.
- Invest in professional development and staff opportunities to recruit and retain top talent.
- Maximize role as a community hub through arts, culture, and literacy opportunities.
- Emphasize community cohesion and foster deeper connections.
- Position the Library as a place for technology access and support.
- Help make emerging technologies more accessible.

Examples of What You'll See

- A staffing structure that supports emerging and innovative library services
- Training for staff to enhance the culture of excellent customer service.
- Leadership development programs that build confidence and capacity at all staff levels
- Regular workflow and service model reviews to identify inefficiencies.
- Staff encouraged to take initiative and pilot new approaches to programs or services.
- Expanded professional development, mentoring, and career growth opportunities.
- Clearer internal communication channels and simplified tools
- Toolkits so successful programs and processes can be replicated.

4



EMBRACE THE FUTURE

Fremont Public Library is looking ahead to create spaces and services that adapt to changing needs. This could include planning and budgeting for improved staff work areas and exploring new ways to serve the community beyond the main building, such as through offsite locations and mobile options. At the same time, the library is preparing for continued growth in digital use, ensuring resources are easy to access both in person and online. These steps will help FPLD stay flexible, innovative, and ready for whatever the future brings.

The Fremont Public Library will plan and adapt for changing community needs, ensuring its spaces, services, and resources remain flexible, accessible, and forward-looking.

Strategies

- Strengthen internal capacity
- Invest in infrastructure
- Extend Library presence beyond the building
- Explore new service models
- Expand digital access and engagement
- Plan proactively for community growth
- Embrace adaptability and sustainability

Examples of What You'll See

- Renovated staff spaces with updated work areas to improve efficiency, collaboration, and additional staff for evolving services.
- Exploration of a satellite facility to provide convenient access
- Plans for a mobile unit to reach residents in outlying neighborhoods and community locations.
- Expanded digital services with offerings for digital-only users, including e-resources and improved access to technology help.
- Continue to design spaces, services and operations with adaptability and flexibility in mind so the library can respond to changes and remain resilient.
- Technology and skill-based education programs or online courses tailored to the needs of a diverse community.

Outcomes From This Plan

The result of a successful Fremont Public Library Strategic Plan will be a library that feels more connected, responsive, and inspiring for everyone in the community. Residents can look forward to a place where staff are empowered to innovate and deliver exceptional service, and where programs and collections continue to grow in ways that reflect local interests. Outreach will continue to meet people outside the library's walls, helping people of all ages and backgrounds discover what the library has to offer. Clearer communication will help more neighbors see the library not only as a resource, but as a welcoming destination that makes life a little richer and more fulfilling.

This plan honors the FPLD's strong history and adapts gracefully to change while embracing new opportunities. Spaces will be refreshed and made more flexible, digital access will expand, and creative new service models—like mobile units and pop-up programs—will meet people wherever they are. Expect to see more arts, culture, and multigenerational events that spark joy and connection, along with partnerships that bring valuable services and experiences from the community right into the library. At its heart, this plan is about ensuring Fremont Public Library continues to be a place where everyone feels included, inspired, and excited about what the future holds.

