



BLUEPRINT 2026

2024-2026 Strategic Plan



Introduction

The Greenwood Public Library Blueprint 2026 is a strategic plan developed to continually evaluate the staff, facilities, services, programs, and technology of the library with a view to achieving our vision. We are completing a very successful five-year plan, Blueprint 2023.

The Library serves approximately 32,000 residents within the city of Greenwood in Johnson County. Johnson County has no unserved populations, with three library districts providing edge to edge coverage and engaged in a reciprocal agreement so that all residents may utilize services at any Johnson County library.

Blueprint 2023 helped us make great strides on four focus areas:

- Invest in exceptional user experiences - Our customer service model was transformed.
- Engage and strengthen community - Our community engagement drastically increased
- Advance organizational health- Our financial status and facility health are robust.
- Spark a reading revolution- This lofty goal, directly related to our vision, created new readers and more enthusiasm around reading in our community.

The vision, mission, and values established in 2018 remain our focus in Blueprint 2026. All of the objectives from Blueprint 2023 are the foundation we continue to build on with a view to our changing community.



Library Vision

An engaged community of enthusiastic readers

Library Mission

The Greenwood Public Library actively enriches lives, promotes discovery, and fosters personal growth.

Our Core Values

Building Relationships

Inspiring Excellence

Fostering Growth

Nurturing Creativity

Community Profile

Although our taxing district has not grown significantly in recent years, redevelopment of the Old Town area has made our neighborhood more dense and walkable. It has become a more desirable location for residents and businesses, but continued road construction has made it difficult to achieve smooth forward progress. The redevelopment has increased property values and we have had several significant bumps to our assessed values in the last few years after years of stagnant values, but we have also seen an increased number of TIF districts in our small district.

Greenwood is increasingly diverse. A total of 7.2% are foreign born and 11.2% speak a language other than English. Over 14% of residents are of minority race. Greenwood schools within city limits report 71% of the student body as disadvantaged, 8.3% as English learners, 17.1% as having learning disabilities, and 27.3 needing free and reduced lunch services. However, our two nearest elementary schools are far above the average, with 71% and 73% receiving free and reduced lunch services.

In 2021, ILEARN exam scores in Johnson County had decreased by 8%. Unfortunately, families at an economic disadvantage are clearly at a higher risk of not succeeding in academics. In both 2019 and 2021, Johnson County students whose parents make more than the cutoff for free/reduced lunches performed at least 10% better on the ILEARN than their counterparts. In Center Grove, 61% of students whose families pay for their meals were proficient in English and Math; this was only the case for 34% of students receiving free and reduced lunches. In Greenwood schools these numbers were 43% and 23%. Clark Pleasant elementary schools are 45% economically disadvantaged; this number dramatically jumps to 71% in our Greenwood schools.

In 2023, IREAD scores continued to decline after the pandemic. It is sobering to note that in 2019 Greenwood schools could boast a 94.8% reading proficiency at third grade, but that today those statistics have fallen to 87.4% and are continuing a downward trajectory. This is mission critical for Greenwood. Statistics confirm that reading changes lives, and this is our primary focus at Greenwood Public Library.

Community Needs

It is evident that our community is at a crossroads. We are changing politically, physically, and culturally. Community needs were assessed through a variety of methods including research, surveys, statistics, staff and management team input, and SWOT analysis results. This data is included in the appendix. We also used statistics and trends from the last five years as well as our 2023 quarterly statistics.

We received 1,050 responses to our Future Planning survey, over twice the engagement we had five years ago. Our survey responses were 97% positive, and provided insight to the progress we have made since our last major survey in 2018. The overwhelming themes in the responses were positive and focused on reading, staff, and programs. Many stated that they had never had a negative visit to the library. In the past, most comments had focused on our kids' department and this round saw many more comments of people using our new areas upstairs as well.

The negative comments had three main themes. The noise in the library, the challenges of crowded parking (as a result of development around us), and political issues. This last topic, although only mentioned a handful of times in our 1050 responses, was notable only because this was the first time this has ever shown up on our surveys. These comments did not have to do with any of our actual programs, but rather followed the trends of headlines about libraries. It used to be that the library stereotype was one of shushing, humorless librarians and dusty books. And while a few still hold that anachronistic view, another more dangerous stereotype has emerged. Now we are not merely irrelevant, we are a threat.

If we are to achieve our vision of "An engaged community of enthusiastic readers" we must focus on reading as our first and foremost purpose. Reaching all segments of a divided society demands that we must be relational, inclusive, compassionate, transparent, and caring so that every patron who walks in our door will have no doubt that this is THEIR library.

Strengths | Weaknesses | Opportunities | Threats

We performed SWOT analysis with our entire staff and also with our management team, and it was useful to compare the responses of each group. Both groups identified staff and relationships as a strength, communication and siloing between departments as a weakness, the development around us as an opportunity, and the political environment around libraries as a threat.

The most frequently endorsed items for each group:

	Management Team	Staff
Strengths	Build relationships well inside & out Diverse appeal Excellence/quality product Management/Agility	Staff Connections/relationships Healthy budgets
Weaknesses	Communication and siloing Passivity/hesitancy to act/take action Response to increased busy-ness Number of non-users in district	Parking Space limitations in kids Staff size Communication between departments
Opportunities	Location-exploit/synergy Two School districts Diversity of community Non-profits	Growth in Greenwood Partnerships Young diverse families School districts
Threats	Stereotype of libraries Political environment/divided country Parking	Political distrust & divisions Lack of community conversations Legislation



In order to continue the conversation, the Director also met with each staff person individually to assess stress points within the building. We have undergone three straight years of construction in addition to the Covid years since our last strategic plan. These conversations revealed five basic areas where we need more clarity.

Training	Summer Reading, Evergreen, Timesheets, Teams, Procedures
Supervision	Evaluations, Check-ins, Expectations, Scheduling
Programming	Specialists role, perception of doing “way more” programs, outreach for part timers, too complex a system?
Tasks	Many small tasks added – sustainability? Clarity Teams
Internal tensions	Political divide, religious tensions

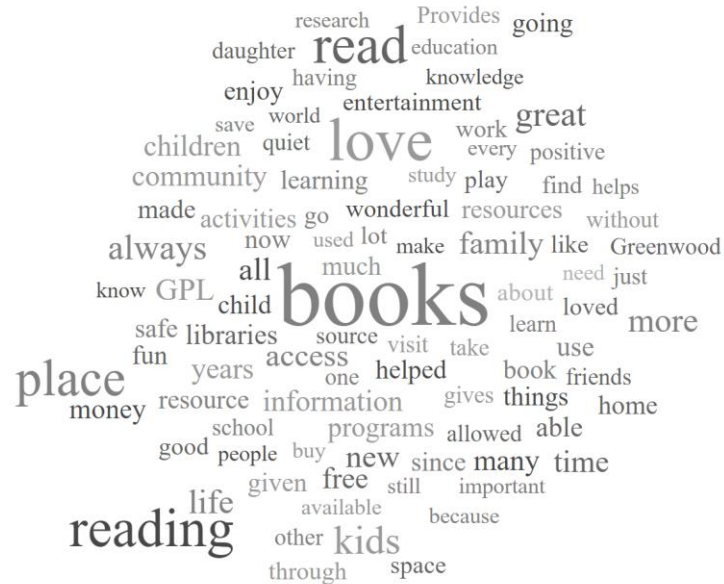
Surveys

Our surveys included a larger, Planning for the Future survey which was distributed to our mailing list, through QR codes in the building, and via social media and also a short in-house survey that was available by ipads at each service desk. Our Planning for the Future survey received 1050 responses, and our in-house Tell Us About Your Visit received 289 responses.

The in-house survey showed more usage in the kids’ department, while the Planning for the Future survey tended to show a heavier concentration of respondents using the rest of the library. Both surveys asked respondents about their library cards, and the majority had a GPL card, although a significant number were still library users from out of our taxing district. The concentration of out of area users seems to be in the kids’ department. This continues to inform our focus on increasing cardholders within our taxing district boundaries.

Our two free form questions included “How has the library impacted your life?” and “What things make for an awesome . . . or not so awesome visit?”

How has the library impacted your life? Printed out, these responses fill 30 pages and are so overwhelmingly positive and inspiring that we shared the unabridged responses with all of our staff.



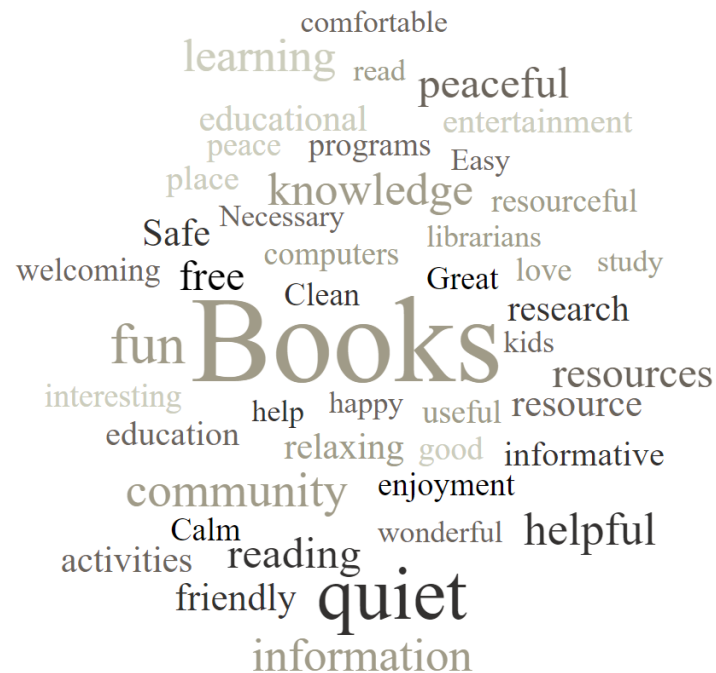
What makes for an awesome . . . or not so awesome visit? This question gave us what we hoped for: the good and the bad. Noisy kids, parking, and politics were generally the negatives, but most chose to answer this question on the positive side and more than a dozen claimed never to have had a bad visit.



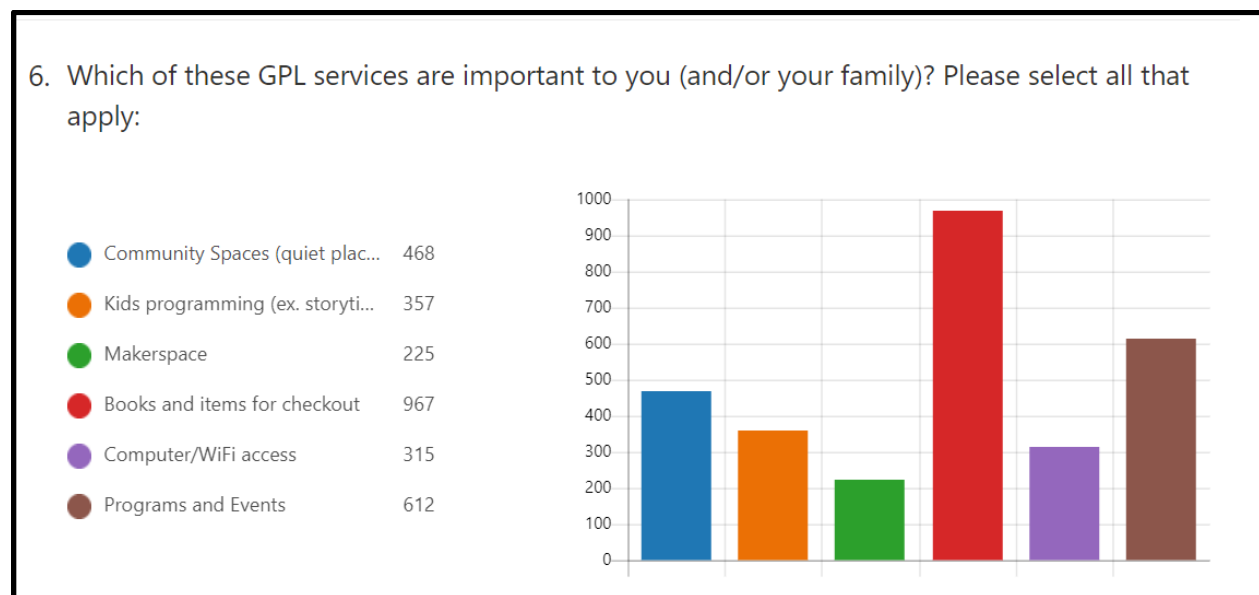
One of our questions was meant to gauge how people feel about the library, and to make the survey a little bit fun:



When asked what three words come to mind when they think of the library, the most frequently used words were:



Most of our respondents used the library weekly or monthly, and spent about an hour browsing. When asked what they used the most at the library, once again, books were the most frequently endorsed:



When asked where they usually get their information about our services, our newsletter, website, and social media were the most popular answers. We continue to work to communicate with our community in the way they best receive information and these answers have changed from the previous survey, with our newsletter showing the largest increase in use.

We attribute the number of positive responses that focused on reading to our Blueprint 2023 successes. We worked to make the library easy with auto renewals and no fines, we replaced Dewey with the Subject Savvy system that thinks like our patrons do, and we worked hard to right size and improve our collection, curated for our community. This is an awesome foundation to build on in the coming three years.



Where are we going and how do we get there?

The following is best understood by looking at our Blueprint 2026 matrix in the appendix. The purpose of this graph is to connect our big vision to **objectives**, **initiatives**, and **outcomes** that will help us move toward our vision for our community. This Strategic Planning tool was very successful in keeping us on track during 2019-2023. Even when the world changed due to the pandemic, we were able to keep ourselves pointed in the right direction and continue our initiatives with adjustments for the current reality. This matrix is based on six sigma concepts and produced the first effective strategic plan the Library has ever had. **Objectives** generally last the length of the strategic plan. **Initiatives** may last three years or be accomplished in one and replaced by another that moves the objectives forward. **Outcomes** change each year as we move the plan forward and evaluate our effectiveness.

Blueprint 2026

1. Future Focused

a. Strategic Transitions

i. Sustainability

1. Identify Resident Cardholders vs. Non-Resident Visitors

- a. Why this matters: We want to focus our efforts on creating more resident library cardholders. We have become a destination library for Non-Resident and Plac card holders and we need to understand where we are succeeding and where there remain gaps.

ii. Staff Development

1. Develop staff training opportunities with LEUs, In-house and virtual conferences

- a. Why this matters: Developing consistency with basic training in the building is the first step. Our onboarding process is fairly consistent but training has not been. Continuing education has never gotten back to 100% since 2020 when it comes to training and travel and it is time to make sure that staff have the connection points and inspiration that this provides.

2. Book Discussions: The Power of Moments

- a. Why this matters: We have had significant staff turnover since we first discovered this book and want to make sure all of our staff are excited about hospitality level patron interactions. Management team and all department teams

will include a short book discussion at their monthly meetings.

2. Reading Connects Us

a. Leverage reading excitement

i. Create, identify, and connect readers (below are year 1 items)

1. Yearly Calendar of Reading Programs

- a. Why this matters: We have created momentum about reading in the last five years, and so has our neighboring library system. We want to capitalize on this momentum and keep it going. This overarching calendar will keep us from over scheduling and ensure that we have a flow of motivational programs through the year.

2. Evaluate and refocus existing programs on reading.

- a. Why this matters: Programs have several functions - to draw new patrons into the building, serve the interests of the community but most importantly, everything must also serve our vision to develop readers and reading skills. Our programming is popular, we want to make sure it is focused.

3. Scoop Rebrand

- a. Why this is matters: Our popular Scoop publication was created to be a one-stop shop for all things GPL but as its popularity and our programs grew it became cost-prohibitive. By switching to in-house printing we can feature more book-focused content and promote library services instead of just programs. We will print fewer editions per year and be able to offer these to more people.

ii. Create and lead educational opportunities (below are year one items)

1. Host first reading mini-conference

- a. Why this matters: Our goal is to connect readers who have shown us that they love opportunities to gather and talk books. Our first True Crime Mini Con just took place and was a huge success.

2. Book Discussions with Targeted Groups

- a. Why this matters: Once again, connecting readers to each other is the goal, with a secondary gain of connecting to our community.

3. Connected Neighbors

a. Find links to our community

i. Focus on Diverse Community and New Residents (below are year one items)

1. Identify partners to help us connect us
 - a. Why this matters: The outreach we've done in the past five years has taught us that knowing the right "connector" can do wonders to our first impression with new residents, or with cultural groups who don't know us. Whether it is a title company helping us with new residents, or a mosque invited for a tour, it is the relationships that make the difference.
2. Develop at least three apartment complex relationships
 - a. Why this matters: We have tried various forms of outreach to apartment complexes and have several who are now reaching out to us for connection and services for their residents - we want to leverage these relationships.
3. New cardholder welcome
 - a. Why this matters: We are inconsistent in how we greet and educate new patrons. Concerns to address are a new card holder packet, library information translated into different languages, and procedures for when departments spot new library card holders and respond to them with consistency.
4. Management Team tours at least three local cultural groups
 - a. Why this matters: As we tour and talk with local cultural groups and show interest in them, we have seen good results as we develop a broader variety of users than those who are naturally comfortable with the library.

4. Open Conversations

a. Clarity of Vision/Values

i. Transform Training

1. Transform training
 - a. Why this matters: Ensuring the job descriptions match reality, that onboarding is consistent, and that all staff have a reasonable amount of clarity of their roles is foundational.

2. Communicate values
 - a. Why this matters: Quarterly staff dialogue on organization values and “hot” topics will help keep us all on the same page.
3. Find balance between vision & secondary goals
 - a. Why this matters: There are many worthy things we could accomplish and it is easy to stray from our main goal of making and inspiring readers. Our commitment to other issues such as services for specialized groups needs to be in service of our primary goal and not conflict.

Ongoing evaluation

For the next three years, the Library will create a new action plan based on Blueprint 2026 Strategic Initiatives to ensure that each objective is being carried forward. Progress will be tracked quarterly by the management team and if a proposed item fails to meet its objective, we can quickly shift our emphasis and keep our goals moving forward.

Facility needs

The Library enters this strategic plan with a facility in exceptional shape, having just completed a renovation project that addressed major issues throughout the building and replaced all furniture and shelving. A shift from construction to regular maintenance will be the goal of the next three years, with parking lot, flooring, and tile upkeep in addition to landscape and grounds. Our HVAC system will require some attention during the next three years as will our electrical boxes. These are already planned and can be paid for out of regularly appropriated funds.



Technology

The Greenwood Public Library has worked hard over the last several years to add new technology and create a sustainable replacement plan. During our last renovation, projectors and screens were added and updated in all public event spaces, video marketing screens were placed in each department, and group work areas including TVs with HDMI hookups were added to our group study rooms. With the assistance of AVC Technology, we have increased security on public and staff computer stations and are in constant conversations on new software and equipment that would be beneficial to our community.

While more patrons than ever are bringing in their own devices, the library is dedicated to assuring access to technology and high speed internet. Our goals for the next three years include maintaining current equipment, evaluating systems and services to assure safe access, and to follow our replacement plan as our library budget allows.

Items will be replaced according to the following schedule:

Computers	3 years from purchase date
Printers / Copiers	4 years from purchase date
Networking	6 years from purchase date, or as need to make use of emerging technologies
Other items	As needed

Replacement schedule:

Year One (2024)	Year Two (2025)	Year Three (2026)
Replace 16 staff computers	Replace 16 staff computers	Replace 16 staff computers
Evaluate patron terminals	Evaluate switches	
Evaluate/Replace USB Backups		

The following equipment was replaced in 2022-2023:

- Wireless AP
- Servers
- SelfCheck Machines
- Security Cameras
- Projectors
- Televisions



Financial resources/sustainability

The Library is fortunate to have retained the service of a financial advisor for the last decade. Our current advisor, Mike Reuter, has extensive experience with taxing districts. Each year Mike prepares a financial outlook for the Library and presents it to our Trustees. This document looks five years into the future and assists us in adjusting our spending and savings goals to meet the challenges that the economy may pose.

As a result, the Library is in better financial shape than at any point in its history. We have an appropriately sized rainy day fund that is able to help us with expected and unexpected maintenance issues, an operating fund that has a cash flow appropriate balance. The Library has not needed assistance with cash flow since 2013. Our personnel budget is appropriately sized to our total operating budget at 61%. A copy of our current fiscal plan is included in the appendix.

Greenwood Public Library Board of Trustees

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