

Elnora Public Library

Plan of Service 2014 – 2018



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Appendix 1: Community Needs Assessment Data

Elnora Public Library

MISSION STATEMENT

The Elnora Public Library is dedicated to the education, recreation, cultural enlightenment and freedom to read by all citizens, as well as providing comprehensive information in a wide variety of formats.

VISION STATEMENT

By providing a warm and welcoming environment for people of all ages, and through a variety of resources and fun, creative programs, Elnora Library strives to foster an informed and literate community.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Village of Elnora is located in the County of Red Deer, in the rolling hills of Central Alberta. It is situated about 75 km southeast of Red Deer. Just over 300 people now reside in our quaint little village. We are home to a large senior population and becoming a popular bedroom community of Red Deer for families. There is also a large number of rural residents who support our local businesses, are members of our many community groups, and utilize our facilities.

LIBRARY PROFILE

Library Staff

Wanda Strandquist –Library Manager

Eileen Darlington-Volunteer

Sharon Barnes-Volunteer

Ms. Strandquist was hired as the librarian in October 2004. She has library hours of two mornings and two evenings per week. Wanda has implemented new reading programs for children and teens, as well as computer information sessions for all ages.

Brief Summary of Annual Report 2013

Library Memberships - 183

Library Visits - 3000

2013 Total Circulation - 2836

Resource Sharing

Items Borrowed - 501 Items Loaned - 815

The library has 6 public computers with wireless access available for the public during regular library hours (we are open 18 hours per week)

Know Your Community: Community Resources and Services

Goal

New residents will have a warm and welcoming environment to relax and obtain information regarding the community

Objectives

Each year, library staff will make available a minimum of 5 up-to-date information packages to new residents in the community and surrounding area

- The library will provide current community information brochures and newsletters

Between 2015 and 2017, at least 70% of all new residents will have a library membership

- The library will provide a free 3 month library membership in each information package
- The library staff will ensure that the Village of Elnora also has free 3 month library memberships to hand out to new residents who visit the Village office

Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces

Goal

Community members will have a central location where everyone can find community information and opportunities

Objectives

By the end of 2018, there will be an increase in the total annual number of visits to the library website by 20% from our current 2013 total of 3160

- Add link from Village of Elnora website to Elnora Library website and vice versa
- AB YI program provides the library with interns who help community members with current technology and they, as well as library staff, promote the library website
- Numbers are available and will be tracked on a yearly basis

Every year, members of at least four community organizations attends a meeting to update and share community information

- Promote sharing of information with other community organizations such as: volunteers needed for events, additional board members required, job opportunities, etc.
- Link to other organizations through our website

Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing and Listening for Pleasure

Goal

Families will have a variety of affordable activities available to them in which all members may participate

Objective

The library will promote/provide at least 2 family oriented activities per year

- Family Movie Day
- Family Literacy Day
- Cow Bus
- Partner with FCSS or 4H to host an event
- Utilize existing available rental space behind the library to host events, if required

OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

PLAN OF SERVICE

Purpose and process of the Elnora Public Library Plan of Service

The purpose of preparing regular long range plans is to both satisfy the requirement to do so by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Alberta, and to give the library, its board, and staff direction in their efforts to best serve the needs of the Elnora and area community.

The Elnora Public Library 2014 - 2018 Plan of Service is based on input from:

- Community members of Elnora and rural County of Red Deer
- Library board members
- Library staff

As part of the process to complete a Plan of Service, the Elnora Public Library Board hosted a community meeting on November 20, 2014. Personal phone calls were made inviting members from different community organizations to participate. Several community members participated, including the Village Mayor, a town council member, village residents, business owners and members from our rural community. We were fortunate to have two consultants from the Parkland Regional Library to conduct the meeting. In doing so, they collected the necessary data and provided us with the information regarding the community needs assessment.

CONCLUSION

The Elnora Public Library board and staff continue to make every effort to meet the Government of Alberta and Municipal Affairs Standards and Best Practices for Libraries in Alberta. We appreciate the support of the Village of Elnora and Red Deer County, which enables the library to provide a high level of service to the community and surrounding area.

We are grateful to the members of the community, the Library Board, the Library staff and Parkland Regional Library representatives who provided input and assistance with this process.

The Elnora Public Library 2014-2018 Plan of Service has been approved by the Elnora Public Library Board.

March 31, 2014

Elnora Public Library Community Planning Committee Meeting

November 20, 2013 - 5:30-9:00pm

Facilitated by Susan Grieshaber-Otto and Rhonda O'Neill, Parkland Regional Library

This meeting was organized by the Village of Elnora's Library Board to inform the development of a new five-year Plan of Service. The Library Board selected a group of individuals to represent a broad cross-section of the Village of Elnora and surrounding municipal district. Individuals were invited to the meeting based on their knowledge of community issues and their ability to represent the interests of one or more stakeholder groups. An information package containing background information about the community and the library was distributed to each invitee prior to the meeting. Of the thirteen individuals invited, twelve were present at the meeting with one addition when the Mayor came out to join the group.

MEETING OBJECTIVES:

Participants will understand their role in the library's strategic planning process

Participants will describe the ideal future for the Village of Elnora

Participants will identify the current strengths and weaknesses of the Village of Elnora and potential opportunities or obstacles that might affect achieving the ideal future

Participants will identify the needs that must be addressed to reach the ideal future of the village

Participants will learn about the current conditions in the library

Participants will identify those needs that could be service priorities for the library

VISIONS STATEMENTS:

Picture your community ten years from now. Imagine that your community and its people have been successful beyond belief. Your community is a place everyone is proud to call home. Now describe what makes it so wonderful. What benefits do people receive from living here? Consider different educational levels, incomes, ethnicities, religious groups, lengths of residence, professions, etc. List the benefits and results that different groups receive in this ideal future version of your community.

This activity was accomplished in three stages: individual brainstorming; individuals shared their ideas in small groups and recorded group vision statements; small group vision statements were read aloud and recorded on flipcharts by the facilitators. All responses, both group and individual, are recorded below.

Children:

- Will have affordable physical activities available to ensure healthy lifestyles at an early age
- There will be sufficient numbers to maintain the K-8 school in town
- Will have programming available for life skills, moms/tots, play school
- Will have a place to hang out

- Will have opportunities to attend faith instruction
- Ensure wide variety of activities, resources, programs and a welcoming place so that children stay out of trouble

Teens:

- Will have activities and access to indoor and outdoor recreational facilities (water park, bike park, swimming pools, etc)
- Will have access to a staffed (full time paid) youth centre
- Will participate in local sports teams and will play against other local teams (inter- and intra-Elnora)
- Will have cultural activities available (music, theatre, arts)
- Will have opportunities to volunteer (leadership course will be available)
- Will have a voice in the community so that they will want to participate in sessions like strategic planning
- Will have enough extracurricular activities out of the school system for all youth
- Will have a sense that the future is here, that employment and affordable housing is available locally

Families:

- Will be able to work and support their families locally (increase in industry will be attracted to Elnora for increased employment opportunities)
- Will have high speed internet so that people will be able to work from home (improve rural high speed)
- Will have acreages available in the area
- Will have affordable single home/rental opportunities for lower-income families (rent to own as well)
- Will have a multiplex (which would include school, pool, rink, bowling, library)
- Will have affordable, family-friendly activities to bring the community together and encourage families to stay together
- Will have green spaces and walking trails
- Will have daycare
- Will be able to get everything needed locally and not have to travel out of the community for goods and services
- Will be able to have animals
- Will have higher quality life for less money

Seniors:

- Will have more affordable and available housing (care within) so that seniors can remain close to home in the community.
- Will have extended care within the community
- Will have transportation services for appointments, shopping, other outings, etc.

- Will have medical aid and resources available locally
- Will have aids (equipment, lending cupboard or library) available
- Will have Meals on Wheels daily
- Will have an activity centre with structured activities
- Will have a safe environment
- Will be able to enjoy activities that enrich their lives
- Will be able to attend events
- Will be able to stay independent
- Will have a staffed lodge with common recreation and dining area

Community and local organizations:

- Will have an increase in local industry (new businesses established allowing for employment, trade, and local buying).
- Will have a strong economic development committee and Chamber of Commerce
- Will have cultural inclusivity/integration
- Newcomers will be welcomed and their cultural experiences in Elnora will be warm
- New residents will receive welcome packages and will have opportunities to get involved in the community (organizations, boards, and volunteer opportunities)
- Will have an increase in new volunteers
- Will have board development and leadership training available
- Will have adult education opportunities available
- Will have cultural activities and a cultural centre available (e.g. for music, theatre group, art shows, art education, dancing club and lessons, language, cultural exchange, etc.)
- Community events will be held monthly bringing people together (affordable)
- Will keep the hotel, grocery store, bank, post office, local newspaper
- Will increase ability to work from home more
- Will have high speed internet to enable home based business
- Will have increased populations to create more support
- Will have economic development committee
- Will have medical and dental services
- Will have more job opportunities for all ages, with land available for business
- Will be a place that people want to relocate to, to increase population

Newcomers:

- Will be welcomed and put to work so that they become involved in the community
- Will be provided with information and resources regarding volunteer opportunities to be involved in community (welcome package)

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT:

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and obstacles that will affect your community's ability to achieve the vision statements you have identified.

The Community Planning Committee conducted a community analysis to determine the strengths and weaknesses within the Village of Elnora as well as the opportunities and obstacles beyond the Village and MD. This activity was accomplished as a whole group brainstorming session. Facilitators recorded the internal strengths and weaknesses and the external opportunities and obstacles on flip charts.

Strengths within the community that support achieving the vision:

- Walking trails, parks, community facilities, school
- Location is close to the river
- Lots of long term businesses (15-20+ in number) including a pharmacy (especially good for seniors)
- K-8 School (awesome school)
- Long term residents provide continuity
- Firehall
- Enthusiastic/passionate/caring population
- Warm and welcoming people in the community
- Organizations – Neighbourhood Place and FCSS
- More land has been annexed – therefore expansion possibilities (industry and residential growth) are potential
- Shopping locally (it is not necessary to leave Elnora to shop)
- Boomtown Trail is a tourist route
- Outdoor rink
- Provincial park close by (Dry Island Buffalo Jump Provincial Park)
- Campground nearby
- Local community members have pride in their yards
- Great summer activities e.g. Bull-a-Rama
- Volunteer Emergency Response
- Meals on Wheels – 2 days per week currently
- Home Care is available
- Drop in centre for seniors
- Curling rink
- Oil & gas companies (good support from them)
- Wanda in the library
- Walking trail
- Community hall
- Ball diamond
- Legion
- Family events
- Meeting facilities (Hall, Ag)
- Main street is attractive and busy

Weaknesses within the community that make achieving the vision more difficult:

- Getting the next generation to step up (get involved and volunteer)
- People are not shopping locally
- Growth is stagnant (yet low availability of affordable housing)

- Rural roads are gravel
- Aging population in Elnora
- Lack of funding for vision, local activities, recreation directors, etc.
- Some people are not involved within the community
- Little youth involvement in the community
- Narrow range of age demographics – youth leave and only a few come back
- People shop in bigger centers
- Lack of volunteers (a few have many hats)
- Limited library open hours
- Becoming a bedroom community
- Very little youth involvement

External opportunities that support achieving the vision:

- Hutterite community
- Golf course nearby
- Close to the River
- Close to Red Deer
- Ecotourism
- Business expansion possibilities
- Partnership with other communities
- Development potential of wetland property
- Walking trails
- Lower tax or tax incentives considered for industry
- Health care centre transformation (feasibility study in process)
- High speed internet available in Elnora (but not outside the municipality)
- Highway 21 has traffic
- Oil field workers access facilities
- Adult learning

External challenges that make achieving the vision more difficult:

- Reduction in grant money – costs are going up
- Graying population less able to participate in community activities
- Difficulties getting new families involved
- Unable to put signage on Highway 21
- Products and services are not always available in Elnora (e.g. cannot purchase gasoline in town on weekends)
- High speed internet in rural areas is inadequate
- Medical care availability is limited (have to travel)
- Transportation is not available to larger centres
- Lack of tourism
- Ever changing technology
- Fear of change for many people

COMMUNITY NEEDS

What community needs have to be addressed to make progress toward the vision? What are our community needs?

Comparing the vision statements with the community analysis, the Community Planning Committee identified nine needs for moving the Village of Elnora forward. Committee members first worked in small groups to identify and record community needs in short, specific phrases. Needs from each group were shared with the whole group and sorted into similar categories. Then, as a whole, the Committee created a needs statement for each category. These need statements were recorded by the facilitators.

IDENTIFYING NEEDS FOR LIBRARY SERVICE PRIORITIES

Preliminary selection and prioritization of needs that the Elnora Public Library could contribute to meeting through its Plan of Service. What role can the library play in the next three to five years in moving the community towards its vision?

The purpose of this activity was to identify those community needs that the library could make a contribution to fulfilling and then to select the community needs on which the library might focus. The “Needs Decision Tree” model was used to determine whether or not the library could be involved in meeting each of the need statements. Those deemed not relevant to the library were removed. Each of the Committee members then received three dots with which to vote for the one, two, or three needs they felt should be the highest priority for the library in the next five-year Plan of Service.

The chart below lists each of the needs identified through small group work, and shows those needs that were grouped together as well as the resulting need statement. The final column indicates whether the need statement was identified as being relevant to library service planning and the number of votes the need statement received as a library service priority.

Need statements in GREEN were identified as needs in which the Library could play a role in meeting.
 Need statements in BLUE were identified as having no relevance to the Library’s strategic planning and service delivery.

| | | | Need statement | Relevance to library/ Priority level |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| Long term care facility | Increase level of health care providers and respite care | Affordable access to health care | We need long term and respite care. | No role for library |
| High Speed Internet | | | We need access to high speed internet throughout the community including rural areas. | No role for library |
| Transportation (bring community bus back) | Improve transportation services for seniors and children | | We need to improve transportation services for seniors and children. | No role for library |
| Tax incentives to increase business | Promote local shopping | | We need to promote and sustain local businesses. | No role for library |
| We need affordable housing (rental and purchase) | More affordable housing | | We need affordable housing (rental and purchase). | No role for library |
| | | | | |
| Involve the youth in the planning process | Promote or involve youth community (pride & involvement) | | We need our youth to have a voice in the community. | ***** |
| Introduce new families to our community | Develop handbook for new residents | | We need to welcome and invite involvement from our new residents. | ***** ***** |
| We need to increase volunteerism | Encourage volunteerism | Increase volunteerism activities for youth | We need to encourage to increase volunteerism. | ***** |
| Organize cultural events / More community events | More affordable family events / Increase family events | Life skills for children | We need more affordable family events & activities. | ***** ** |
| Create more green spaces | Weekend courses (craft, art, photography) | | | |

