

Raymond A. Whitwer
Tilden Public Library
2018 – 2021 Strategic Plan & Community Needs Response

The Library Director and Tilden Public Library Board worked together to comprise a three year strategic plan for the Raymond A. Whitwer Tilden Public Library. This plan reviews the library's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; presents a series of fundamental statements relating to the library's vision, mission, values and objectives; and sets out proposed strategies, goals and action plans in response to the needs of the library, encounters with patrons, and engaging with associations and organizations. In addition, data gathered through a community survey process revealing the needs and concerns of community members is also summarized in this plan, which will be reviewed annually and revised as needed.

Mission Statement

It is the central purpose and role of Raymond A. Whitwer Tilden Public Library to provide each individual with equal and adequate access to informational resources, providing valuable information and opportunities, constructive and enjoyable programming & events, and a place for learning and discovery.



Community Demographic Profile

Tilden is a friendly town located in both Madison and Antelope Counties. Tilden is served by U.S. Highway 275 and Highway 45. The city is 22 west of Norfolk, is 134 miles northwest of Omaha, and 148 miles northwest of Lincoln. Tilden is the home of famous Phillies baseball player and Hall of Famer, Richie Ashburn, and the birthplace of Scientology creator L. Ron Hubbard.

Population:

- As per the 2010 official census, the population of the City of Tilden is 953. The 2016 ACS Estimate is 1,184. Factoring in the rural areas of Tilden with the same zip code, 68781 and which are serviced by the library, increases the count to 1,407, or 1,621 using the 2016 ACS estimate. There are 403 households within the city limits. (ACS - 538)
- 8.3 % of the Tilden city population is under 5 years; 13.7 % is 5 – 14 years; 17.1% is 15 – 29 years; 21.9% is 30 – 49 years; 17.5% is 50 – 64 years; 21.3% is over the age of 65. (2010 Census)

Education:

- Elkhorn Valley Schools (EVS) resides in the City of Tilden, supporting elementary K -6 and high school 7 - 12, with a current (2017 - 2018) total enrollment of 397 students, or 259 elementary and 138 high school students. In 2018 the school has been remodeled and enlarged to accommodate an increase in enrollment.
- According to 2016 statistics within the same area code: For persons 25 years and older, 3.2 % of the population has a less than 9th grade education; 8.2 % has a 9th to 12th grade education with no diploma. Overall 88.6 % are high school graduates (includes equivalency); 16.7 % have a Bachelor's degree or higher.
- Media facilities in the Elkhorn Valley Schools include a Library incorporated with updated technology such as smart boards, virtual field trips, and wireless internet access throughout, all of which meet and exceed the needs for our area.
- Although higher education facilities are located at a distance of 25 miles and greater, EVS has made available any institution of higher education that is online. EVS's most common partner is with Northeast Community College in Norfolk.
- Currently in 2018 there are 3 families with 2 or more children who are not enrolled into the public school system but do participate in a state approved homeschool curriculum.

Language and Ethnicity:

- Based on statistics from the 2010 census: 96.4% of the population in the city of Tilden and area speaks English only, (2016 ACS - 97.8%). 3.3% speaks another language (2016 ACS – 2.2%)
- The population of 68781 is predominantly white, 96.2% while 0.4% are black or African American, and 2.2% Hispanic or Latino. Other race makes up 1.4% of the population including 0.2% American Indian and 0.6% Asian. (2016 ACS shows 96.4 % is white)

Employment and Economics:

- According to the 2010 census, the number of residents over 16 years of age is 821, with 433 or 52.7% in the labor force. Of those 419 or 51% are employed and 14 or 1.7% are unemployed. (2013 data shows an increase in the unemployment rate to 2.4%). 388 or 47.3% are not in the labor force.
- 86.8% of those employed commute to/from work by car, van or truck, however, the Mean travel time to work is 22 minutes theorizing that the majority of residents are working outside of the city.
- Of those in the labor force, education and health care services make up the largest industry or occupation, 22.2% while agriculture only makes up 2.4%. 79.7% of the labor force are private wage and salary workers, 14.8% are Government workers and 5.5% are self-employed.
- According to the 2016 ACS survey, there are 146 veterans in the 68781 area, with the majority 34.9 % being over the age of 75 and 100% male.
- As per the 2010 census, the median household income for the city of Tilden is \$35,833 while the median family income is \$49,500. Median income for male, full-time year round workers is \$38,250 and for female full-time year round is \$29,375.
- The overall percentage of all families whose income was below the poverty level for the 12 months leading up to 2010 was 6.7%. Taking into consideration varying factors based on the age and number of family members produces a range of those below the poverty level from 1.9% - 28.6%.
- In 2017 – 2018 the number students at Elkhorn Valley Schools on the Free and Reduced Lunch program: Elementary (PK-6) 68 or 26.25% and High school (7-12) 51 or 36.96% of those enrolled.

S.W.O.T Analysis

This strategic plan addresses the following key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats which apply to Raymond A. Whitwer Tilden Public Library now and in the foreseeable future:

Internal Strengths:	Internal Weaknesses:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experienced & friendly staff • Tech & design proficient Director • Beautiful and spacious facility • Room to expand collection/displays • Original displays/artifacts /pieces bring visitors into library. • Attached large auditorium for programming / events and rent out. • 10 public access internet computers and WiFi. Free use Data bases available. • Full-time operating hours for customer convenience. • Private additional funding available. • Understanding, willing, and functional Library Board and Library Foundation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient number of volunteers for programs and functions. • Age and health of some staff members • Insufficient publicity and marketing of library services available. • Ongoing and much needed building maintenance, upkeep and repairs. Unavailable & unwilling people for building repairs. • Too many necessary projects and not enough time to accomplish them.
External Opportunities:	External Threats:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The increasing population of children and young families in our community. • The availability of grants and resources. • Day care, assisted living centers and elderly population offer opportunities for outreach programming. • The continued development of an Early Reader / Beginning Chapter book section • Partnering with new community organizations • Growing interest in entrepreneurship. • Social media for additional marketing. • High school volunteers under the community service program at school as an option. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition for scheduling activities/events due to existing and new organizations. • Loss of elderly population who were advocates and fully supported the library. • Limited advocacy and library participation from a majority of city officials. • Shortage of available and/or interested volunteers. • Public awareness of services • Insufficient marketing avenues

S.W.O.T. Strategic Plan

The following critical strategies continue to be pursued in order to address those attainable weaknesses and threats, and expand upon the opportunities and strengths that encompass the library and library personnel.

1. Design a professional trifold brochure with library information to use as a tool for marketing and promoting the library, hand out to new patrons.
2. With area organizations and entities offering more entertainment type activities, we will explore more insightful and beneficial programming to the community, different and unique to our library venue.
3. Continue to develop and build the Early Reader/Beginning Chapter Book section of the library for our young readers.
4. Clean and continue to reorganize areas of library to be used more efficiently.
5. Create more appealing spaces, add unique and innovative displays, and enhance collection with off-the-wall books and publications to attract the younger generation.
6. Develop more outreach programs for the elderly and public at the Assisted Living Center.
7. Work with local newspaper toward developing a marketing campaign to increase paper circulation which will be beneficial to all businesses including the library.
8. Find ways to involve other organizations to work with the library. Reach out to potential volunteers.
9. Continue advocating to City officials through reports, data and media attention the important role the library plays in the community and the need to increased funding.
10. Stay on top of maintenance and repair issues, and keep library clean. Reiterate to staff to stay observant and attentive at all times.

Assessing Community Needs

The following analyses is a result of a Community Response Needs survey which was distributed by mail to a diverse group of 105 Tilden community members, both rural and city, enclosed with a self-addressed stamped return envelope. This survey consisted of 9 demographic questions and 14 yes/no/essay questions, and was completely anonymous. Of the 100 surveys distributed, 52 community members responded, ranging in age, gender, economic status, employment, level of education, property owners or renters, and number of household members.

Of the responses received, 46 people answered YES to being satisfied with quality of life in the community. 6 people answered SOMEWHAT and 0 people answered NO.

While the majority of those respondents were satisfied with their overall quality of life in Tilden, the following issues and concerns were expressed repeatedly, listed in order of importance.

1. The need for stricter law enforcement.
2. Addressing an ongoing and growing drug problem.
3. The removal or clean-up of abandoned & unmaintained houses and buildings.
4. A need for a transportation service for the elderly to travel to Norfolk for shopping and doctor's appointments, along with elderly day care for activities, and elderly fitness programs.
5. The appearance and condition of Main Street, sidewalks and buildings, and the condition of roads and sidewalks throughout town.
6. The lack of decent housing for purchase or rental, and the need for more (decent) housing projects for the elderly and lower income families.
7. After school activities for younger kids and those not involved in sports.
8. The need for a recreation center
9. Mental health facilities and/or support groups
10. A variety of more stores, restaurants, and entertainment in town.

When asked what activities, organizations or facilities in our community that people utilized which were more satisfying or had a special meaning, purpose or importance, the library was mentioned 26 times. This is half of the number of surveys returned concluding that more public awareness is needed, and more activities and programs that are beneficial to the community need to be implemented.

Other comments and concerns were individually conveyed, some indicating individual needs, while others suggested unrealistic desires.

Library Action Plan – Goal & Objectives:

The Quality of Life survey was designed to aid in the structure of this strategic report and to gain a better understanding and determination of how the library could contribute its services to fulfil community needs. With the information provided, the library plans to take the following actions:

Community need #4 – Transportation needs, informational programs/activities and fitness programs for the elderly.

Goal

To spread awareness that there is a need for a transportation business or company for the elderly and fill this need. Offer more outreach informational activities and programming for the elderly.

Objectives

1. Library Director will present survey findings to the October 2018 City Council meeting, outlining this particular need in hopes of generating entrepreneurship or ideas.
2. Library staff will research the transportation groups recommended in survey to see how these operations work.
3. Contact transportation groups directly, or pass information onto the City, Senior Center and Assisted Living Center for input and assistance.
4. Work with Director of Prairie View Assisted Living Center and the members of the senior center to offer more outreach programs to the elderly in the community.
5. Research the possibility of offering an over 60 and Fit exercise type program for the elderly to be held in the Lied Auditorium at the library at least once a week.
6. Talk to local fitness center owner and/or North East Community College to find instructor and expense associated.

Community need # 7 - After school programs and activities for children not involved in sports.

Goal

To provide a space for local children's organizations (i.e. 4-H club, Girl Scouts, etc) to hold after school activities, or develop library sponsored children's programs or activities.

Objectives

1. Library Director will contact counselors at EV Elementary School to determine an accurate account of the need for after school programs.
2. Library Director will contact local organizations to make them aware of this need, and determine if there is a demand for available meeting spaces. Talk with leaders of these organizations to see if library can assist in developing specific programs or activities, or work with them in an outreach capacity.
3. Search for activities or programs that the library could hold weekly, or that would give a child a specific project to do throughout the week.
4. Approach the Library Foundation about the possibility for funding.
5. If such a program can be implemented, the target date would be set for Fall/Winter of 2019

Community need #9 – The need for mental health or support groups (ex: AA, drug addiction).

Goal

To offer a place for community members to meet with support group organizations as an alternative to driving to Norfolk.

Objectives

1. Research and contact Chapters or organizers for specific groups.
2. Arrange for dates and times for meetings.
3. Marketing

Other community needs listed – Regarding additional concerns, the library will carry out the following:

Goal

To make known the concerns and issues of those who responded to the survey and to create an awareness to those people who have the capability to pursue and make changes.

Objective

1. The Library Director will create a spreadsheet outlining all of the data, concerns and issues collected and will present a copy of the spread sheet to the members of the City Council and Mayor at the City Council meeting in October 2018.
2. Make the survey outcomes available to the public through library website
3. Inform local businesses mentioned in survey of community member's responses as a possible decision making tool.

Community needs not listed - Although not specifically mentioned in the survey, the library feels there is a need for better public awareness pertaining to what is available in the city in regards to businesses, activities, organizations, procedures, and codes & policies, especially for new residents moving into the area.

Goal

To provide information to residents moving into the community, giving them a better insight about Tilden. Provide another marketing avenue for business and organizations in the form of welcome packets

Objective

1. To compile a spreadsheet with information and contacts pertaining to the community that will be beneficial to new residents.
2. To approach businesses and organizations in town to provide information and incentives for goods and services.
3. To order any materials, bags. etc for the creation of welcome packets.
4. Distribute packets to city office where they can be handed out to new residents.

Conclusion:

The Raymond A. Whitwer Tilden Public Library will continue its efforts to identify the needs of the public by asking questions and listening to new and existing customers, by searching out information via the newspaper, newsletters and local social network sites, and by uniting with local organizations and associations. The library understands that it is beneficial to both the library and members of the community to create and maintain awareness, and to continually seek out opportunities which will generate interest and engage the public.

Upon review of this strategic plan on an annual basis, the Tilden Public Library Board and the Library Director will explore what efforts have been made, accomplishments that have occurred, and analyze the reasons for successes and failures.

Approved by the Tilden Library Board on Sept 10, 2018