

# Future Focus Extended 2010-2013

## An Interim Strategic Plan for the Upper Dublin Public Library



Developed by the Upper Dublin Public Library  
Library Board and Staff

October 2009



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Kristina D'Amore – North Hills Coordinator

## **A Message from the President of the Upper Dublin Public Library Board of Directors**

Dear Upper Dublin Community:

It is with great pride in the Upper Dublin Public Library and its staff that I share with you our Interim Plan which will guide the Library for the next few years. In April 2004, the Upper Dublin Public Library developed its first long range plan, *Future Focus 2004 - 2009*. Using the plan as its blueprint, and with the enthusiastic support of the Upper Dublin Board of Commissioners, the Library has managed to achieve a majority of the goals and objectives identified in the plan. But, by 2008, it was apparent that some goals could not be met given the space constraints of the Library. The Library then commissioned a comprehensive facilities plan. Based on Township demographics, patron and staff input, economic realities, and other factors, several facility alternatives were proposed, ranging from expanding the library in its present location to building a new, free standing building in a location to be selected by the Commissioners.

As the ultimate outcome of the facilities plan is still unknown and depends on variables not within the control of the Library, the Library has developed an Interim Plan for 2010-2013. The Interim Plan addresses the community needs identified by the facilities study and builds upon the goals and objectives of the *Future Focus* plan. The Interim Plan assumes that no expansion or building will take place in the next three years and attempts to overcome the demonstrated need for more space by emphasizing the Library's commitment to providing core library services and collections, such as current fiction, important non fiction, magazines and newspapers, research materials, and audio visual materials (including CDs, DVDs, and audio books), as well as teen materials and programming, children's materials and activities, adult enrichment, and, of course, Internet access to all the residents of Upper Dublin. Library usage in the Township has grown exponentially since the 2004 plan, and the Interim Plan recognizes that growth and envisions even heavier Library usage in the years to come.

I hope all of you will continue to support the Library and help us meet the goals and objectives set forth in *Future Focus Extended 2010-2013*.

Suane S. Strauss  
President, Board of Trustees  
Upper Dublin Public Library

# Executive Summary

## Planning History

In 2003, the Upper Dublin Public Library began a long range planning process to develop near and long term strategies for delivering and improving library services to residents. The Library Board established a Planning Committee made up of Board members, one staff person and one community member to work with consultants in developing the plan. The consultants gathered community data through focus groups, a town meeting and a paper survey. From an analysis of the survey data, Upper Dublin demographics, and library usage statistics, *Future Focus 2004-2009* was developed.

Over the last five years, the library has made significant progress in library services by achieving many of the strategies defined. To measure progress, reports were made biannually by the Library Director. By no means an exhaustive list, below are some of those achievements:

### **Collections**

- Developed the High Interest Titles (HITs) collection, making bestselling titles more readily available
- Offered audio books that patrons can download from home onto CDs, MP3 players or iPods
- Added freestanding and end panel displays in Adult Fiction and the teen and children's areas to better highlight collections
- Introduced Playaways to the collection—audio books that come preloaded on their own listening device
- Developed a teen-appropriate video game collection for check out
- Added new circulating collections, from multicultural materials and books in foreign languages to arboretum passes and Kill A Watt meters

### **Staffing**

- Added a part-time Teen Librarian to develop specific collections and services for this unique and formerly underserved audience
- Added a part-time Marketing Specialist to guide and maintain consistent communications with the public about library services

### **Hours**

- Increased hours—added 6 hours/week throughout the year and maintained regular weekend hours all summer

### **Facilities**

- Offered 24/7 curbside book drops
- Installed eight wired carrels for quiet reading, study and laptop use
- Provided hot coffee, tea, or cocoa for only \$1/cup at the Friends-sponsored beverage center

- Expanded the teen section to make room for more seating, computers, and shelving
- Implemented a new, consistent and comprehensive signage system

### **Technology**

- Added 10 new Internet public workstations for a total of 27 at the main and branch libraries combined
- Made Microsoft Office tools available on all library public workstations
- Enabled sound on all public workstations for use with headphones
- Became a wireless “hot spot” so patrons can connect their laptops at the main and branch libraries
- Redesigned the library’s website, making this “3<sup>rd</sup> library branch” more intuitive and navigable and providing new features like the Staff Picks blog

### **Programs**

- Established the Teen Library Council and increased an emphasis on improving teen services, collections, and programs with their assistance
- Arranged a mobile classroom of laptops onsite for use at computer classes and teen programs
- Taught classes on library resources, including how to download audio books, use your online account, and search Ancestry.com
- Launched a comprehensive education program for computer literacy, with classes for beginners and one-on-one computer mentoring taught by staff and volunteers
- Delivered annual “traveling storytimes” to preschools throughout the Township to foster a love of literacy in beginner readers
- Developed a series of collaborative events and services for the community by sharing resources with other township departments and the school district

### **Public Relations**

- Developed a new library logo to represent the library’s identity for use on library cards, letterhead, and website
- Introduced keychain library cards
- Installed an outdoor message board to advertise upcoming library events
- Kept patrons up to date on what’s happening at the library and within the community through the new lobby information center
- Informed residents of library news through a 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary township-wide newsletter mailing. In addition to a monthly eNewsletter, the library’s newsletter can now be found in the Parks & Recreation Leisure Guide, mailed to homes three times a year
- Created a presence on Facebook—patrons can become a Fan of the Upper Dublin Public Library

While many of the plan's strategies for improving the existing main facility were accomplished during the early years of the project (see list above), by 2006, only the more involved strategies were left to investigate, including:

- Creating an ongoing space utilization plan for the library with the intent of creating more public space
- Creating a facilities plan that emphasized space usage and a welcoming "café/community living room" environment
- And in the long term, looking ahead 5-10 years for opportunities to expand or build a new library to meet community growth and future needs

As the improvements listed above were implemented, it became clear that space issues had to be more carefully explored, not only to prepare for future library services, but to satisfy the remainder of the goals identified in *Future Focus 2004-2009*, from expanding library collections to better meet specific community needs and the growing number of formats (goal 1) to providing a greater technology presence in the library (goal 4) to expanding services and programs for lifelong learning, from toddlers to retirees (goal 5).

Himmel & Wilson Consultants, of Milton, Wisconsin, were hired in 2008 to develop a study that would investigate these facility-related strategies in one project. They were charged with recommending up to a 30-year solution for the library, offering a full range of alternatives, from modifying and/or expanding the current facilities to building a new facility.

Himmel & Wilson Consultants presented their findings and recommendations in *Inventing the Future of the Upper Dublin Public Library*, which was presented at the Commissioners' Stated Meeting in April 2009. They offered three schemes for onsite expansion and an option for building a new facility. Reprogramming the library's current space was not recommended. These options and others are currently under consideration along with several other township departments' capital needs.

### **The Planning Process for *Future Focus Extended 2010-2013***

Now, in the final days of *Future Focus 2004-2009*'s timeline and with the library's future facility needs still undecided, the Library Board and director determined that an interim plan was necessary to ensure the library's continued progress in providing valued library services to the community. Unlike *Future Focus 2004-2009* and *Inventing the Future of the Upper Dublin Public Library*, which were developed with the support of library consultants and Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding, it was determined that this plan would be developed by the Library Board and staff, utilizing the earlier studies for support.

This short-term plan, entitled *Future Focus Extended 2010-2013*, maintains the general format and goals of its predecessor; only the strategies have changed.

The results of the community surveys, conducted in 2003 and 2008, form the basis for the plan and guide the strategies recommended for achieving the plan's goals. Discussions at Library Board meetings and among staff with regard to library operational needs have also influenced the strategies included here as have general trends in library tools and services.

### **A Note about Capital Improvements**

Since at this time it is unclear what, if any, type of expansion is in the library's future, *Future Focus Extended 2010-2013* does not focus on growing or improving services that require more space. Research supports that the following services (in no particular order) are desired by the community and should strongly be included in future library planning. However, more than the 15,000 square feet currently available is needed before implementation.

- Better delineation between children/teen/adult areas
- Café
- Comfortable, quiet reading area (particularly for adults)
- Expanded teen area
- Self Checkout Service Station(s)
- Study Rooms/tutoring spaces

### **Priorities for *Future Focus Extended 2010-2013***

*Future Focus Extended 2010-2013* expands on several priorities from the first *Future Focus* plan, namely increasing the community's awareness of the library, improving collections, developing solid teen services, and supporting the staff with the tools they need to ensure the library remains a relevant and valuable community resource.

#### **Community Awareness**

Many of this plan's strategies concentrate on gaining greater community support and getting people to feel invested in their library. Library staff will continue to explore new opportunities for reaching out to residents, schools, and business groups to encourage involvement, whether through usage of the library's services, volunteering time and expertise to the library's mission, or funding library projects and programs. Additionally, library staff will continue to seek more joint ventures with community partners. By sharing resources, these collaborations allow the library and partner organizations to make a greater impact on the community as a whole.

#### **Collections**

Collections remain the library's most popular service so they remain a priority with the Library Board and staff. A Materials Selection & Collection Development Policy was extensively revised and updated, with sections added, in January 2008 and again in 2009. Providing an outstanding collection requires continual

maintenance and evaluation to ensure the library is acquiring materials that support the community's current and varied interests.

### **Teen Services**

Services for young adults have received more attention in recent years since the creation of the library's Teen Librarian position. As a direct result, teen collections and programs have improved and expanded significantly. Upper Dublin teens can be confident they have a voice in their library, particularly since the formation of the Teen Library Council. Nonetheless, services for teens have not yet received the same level of support and professionalism as children and adult services. The strategies identified in this plan, beginning with the need for a full-time Teen Librarian, aim to remedy this oversight.

### **Library Staff**

Personal service remains the hallmark of the Upper Dublin Public Library. The library's greatest asset, the staff, is often cited as one of the primary reasons why patrons continue to return to this library. The library has seen extensive increases in usage over the last several years. As usage of the library facilities, collections, and services grows, continuing to provide staff with the tools and resources they need to handle these increases while allowing them to keep that personal touch with the community need to be explored and implemented.

## **Future Focus Extended: Goals and Objectives**

The following goals and objectives describe the roadmap for the Upper Dublin Public Library to develop the resources and operations necessary for fulfilling its vision and mission.

### **Goal 1: Refresh and expand library collections to meet current needs in all formats**

#### **Objectives:**

##### **1.1 Review and expand the current collection development policy**

###### **Strategies:**

- Develop detailed, prioritized weeding schedules each year based on an analysis of the state of all collections
- Develop a planned phase out of VHS and books on tape collections, eliminating all but important titles only available in the older format

##### **1.2 Develop collections to meet specific community needs**

###### **Strategies:**

- Investigate the addition of more museum/arboreta passes to the collection
- Investigate and plan for the addition of new and emerging material formats (i.e. MP3s, Blu-Ray DVDs, etc.)
- Continue to expand collections for foreign-language readers and English-as-a-Second Language materials

##### **1.3 Increase collections and use of popular titles and materials**

###### **Strategies:**

- Examine loan periods during annual review of Materials Use Policy to determine if they are still appropriate. In an effort to better serve the community and make materials more accessible, consider extending loan periods and providing limitless renewals on Upper Dublin Library materials if there are no requests
- Review collection development resources being utilized by each department. Ensure that collections are including all popular/commercial titles if community interest warrants (e.g. Dora the Explorer). If necessary, consider which other resources (newspapers, websites, etc.) should be added to the purchasing process in order to better serve the community
- Develop a system for soliciting specific collection requests (i.e. suggestion boxes posted near collections)
- Examine AV purchasing methods to ensure the library receives the latest popular audio-visual materials

- Investigate implementing rental books as a way to make bestsellers more easily available to patrons willing to pay for the privilege to access. If implemented, consider if this service eliminates the need for the High Interest Titles collection or adds to it

**Goal 2: Sustain the environment that allows a friendly, knowledgeable staff and responsive services offered with a personal touch**

**Objectives:**

**2.1 Match staffing and hours to community needs**

**Strategies:**

- Develop departmental staffing plans to help library department heads delegate activities and identify staffing needs
- Promote and grow volunteer program, offering new responsibilities that can unburden growing staff workloads and improve efficiency (i.e. make calls for holds; pull hold requests from the shelves, prepare self-pickup holds, etc.)
- Evaluate the hours the library is open to the public in order to meet resident needs and usage demands, and revise if desired and funding available

**2.2 Continue to provide incentives and opportunities for staff to deliver quality service**

**Strategies:**

- Prepare orientation packets to welcome new staff (i.e. offer letter, checklist, copy of job description, employment paperwork, etc.)
- Define a process and develop a checklist for training, orienting, and evaluating new employees to ensure they quickly and efficiently become contributing members of the library team
- Develop a clear and simple process for documenting library incidents
- Continue to provide incentives to retain quality staff & volunteers. Consider a low-cost rewards system (consider Friends sponsorship; i.e. free book sale books for hours worked, free coffee, etc.)
- Consider logistics of offering an annual half-day all staff training session onsite
- Gather a staff team to develop an Emergency Manual. Follow up with training to ensure all staff understand and are able to respond to emergencies for the protection of themselves and the public

**Goal 3: Improve the existing facility to create a more comfortable easier to use environment for library users and begin to study solutions to space limitations**

**Objectives:**

**3.1 Review the library space and make short term, low cost improvements that respond to users' needs**

**Strategies:**

- Investigate artwork for the story hour room that is appropriate for all audiences using the space
- Consider replacing current beverage system with a coin-operated service
- Investigate outdoor space availability for library programs or other events

**3.2 Review and remove barriers to use of the library**

**Strategies:**

- Work with the township for longer term solutions to parking issues in relation to potential renovation of the parking lot

**3.3 Consider longer term needs for library service to Upper Dublin**

**Strategies:**

- If and when library expansion is possible, collaborate with the township, the Friends of the Library, and the Library Board to seek fundraising opportunities to support a capital project
- Seek low-cost alternatives for asking residents to contribute to a library capital campaign (i.e. incorporate into township tax forms)

**Goal 4: Create an exceptional technology presence in the library that will help build an information literate community**

**Objectives:**

**4.1 Provide a greater technology presence in the library to respond to resident's needs**

**Strategies:**

- Develop a technology plan for the library
- Install a color printer for use by residents if printer management software is obtained

- Investigate capability to provide wireless printing to a public printer through the township wireless already provided in the library

## **4.2 Improve technology infrastructure and website**

### **Strategies:**

- Install a coin-operated photocopier. Consider if upgrade to a color copier is desirable and cost effective
- Install computer reservation and print management software on the public computer network at the main library and consider for the branch
- Install a coin-operated printing system that allows patrons to recover their own print outs if print management software is obtained
- Implement an automated telephone system in conjunction with the township's upgrade
- Explore value-added features of the library's website software. Develop guidelines for use for those features implemented (i.e. provide staff/board-only spaces; provide Teen Library Council more active participation in developing their own content, etc.)
- Investigate township-wide network initiatives and technology upgrades to provide faster Internet connections and efficiency in network administration

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| <h2><b>Goal 5: Expand services and programs for lifelong learning from toddlers to retirees</b></h2> |
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### **Objectives:**

#### **5.1 Develop additional programs and services for children and teens**

### **Strategies:**

- Hire a full-time teen librarian to further develop services to teens, work closely with the school district as well as supplement library services to children and provide additional support for the reference department when needed
- Continue to grow and develop the Teen Library Council. Encourage the school district to recognize this organization (i.e. through a club status, with community service credit, etc.)
- To offset crowding in the library after school, investigate (possibly with the Parks & Recreation department) the creation of a teen space within the library or upstairs in the community rooms. Develop a space where students can access all the tools they use in the library—group tables, laptops with Internet connections, games/other tools that can be assembled each afternoon. Determine staffing and funding needs, and seek grants if necessary

- Collaborate with the school district and the Special Education Advisory Council of Upper Dublin to develop a reading mentoring program, pairing high school students with younger students
- Develop procedures and guidelines for expanding the library's teen blog to include recommendations from Teen Library Council members to their peers.
- Investigate what it would take to run storytimes more frequently or year round
- Evaluate the organization of the Summer Reading Club program and its many components, particularly the distribution of incentives. Involve the Friends in purchasing or soliciting for prizes for this popular library program
- Meet with art teachers to develop a plan for displaying student artwork in the library. Consider delegating the coordination of this ongoing project to the Teen Library Council
- Coordinate a program with the school district and other schools that makes the library a field trip destination for all students of a given year (2<sup>nd</sup>-graders?). Pre-arrange for students to receive library card applications through their schools so cards can be presented upon their visit. Consider hosting near the beginning of the school year or in conjunction with Pennsylvania's annual One Book, Every Young Child event
- Invite school faculty to another class (i.e. Tumblebooks in 2009) to acquaint them with the library's new collections, resources, services. Develop into a networking event held regularly throughout the year

## **5.2 Develop additional programs and services for adult learners**

### **Strategies:**

- Continue to seek quality programming for adult learners (i.e. health fair, more author events)
- Continue to provide staff, space, and equipment support to the Friends Special Events Committee
- Develop and present classes designed specifically for township staff (i.e. social networking, Twitter, library resources) where interest warrants
- If library space and staffing permit and there is community interest, investigate English as a Second Language one-on-one tutoring or a weekly gathering

**Goal 6: Review and enhance the opportunities for library service at the North Hills Community Library branch, continuing to improve the services, programs, furnishings and collections at North Hills**

**Objective:**

**6.1 Continue to improve services and collections at the North Hills Community Library branch**

**Strategies:**

- Create an awareness campaign targeted at NH and area community (i.e. mail letter invitation to all NH residents, listing services; share printing/ mailing costs with other Community Center services)
- Consider how to house and fund more public computer stations at the library
- Develop regular ongoing afterschool support programs (seek opportunities to work with NH Learning Center)
- Provide programs for children and parents that support and encourage reading and educational advancement (i.e. SAT prep, FAFSA assistance, reading mentoring program, storytimes)
- Expand availability of the library's community/civic information resources (i.e. forms, brochures, etc.) with local residents' interests in mind
- Investigate logistics of providing regular delivery service between North Hills and main library
- Reevaluate library hours to determine if they best meet the community's needs. Consider implementing Saturday hours

**Goal 7: Build a broad base of support for the library and for library funding by improving community awareness of the library, its programs and services, through marketing and advocacy**

**Objectives:**

**7.1 Improve community awareness about the library**

**Strategies:**

- Develop a memorable and catchy slogan/mission statement
- Develop a brochure that highlights the results of the library's facilities study, *Inventing the Future of the Upper Dublin Public Library*, for distribution to residents and at organization/business presentations
- Improve advertising for MCLINC email services, especially with the new first overdue notice emails beginning September 2009
- Investigate and implement multiple methods for encouraging library eNews and library card registrations

- Develop a plan to market use of the library’s display case to local organizations to produce more variety in displays (i.e. Upper Dublin Historical Society)
- Annual “welcome back” email from library director to school district faculty, encouraging library card registrations and use of the public library
- Develop a marketing/publicity plan for library events

## **7.2 Create plan for broader based community support of library and library funding**

### **Strategies:**

- Develop a plan for reaching out to the Upper Dublin business community with the purpose of informing them of our services and programs (i.e. Fort Washington Business Association, Ambler Rotary, Colony Club, etc.)
- Besides general information presentations, consider traveling demonstrations of library products (i.e. MCLINC, Power Library databases, etc.)
- Collaborate with local area libraries on a program to increase library card registrations. Consider approaching shopping areas to partner on a “show-your-library-card-and-receive-a-discount” program
- Reach out to area offices of medical professionals and realtors to distribute library information to their clients
- Continue to support and promote the Friends of the Library. Work with the Friends Board to create greater autonomy for the organization, particularly the management of the ongoing book sale
- Provide support for a Friends fundraising campaign to raise funds for Summer Reading Club incentives. Consider developing an annual appeal
- Study creating an Upper Dublin Public Library Foundation as a new 501©3 organization in support of future library expansion
- Continue to seek local and national grants in support of special library projects or programs (i.e. United Way of SE PA)

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| <p><b>Goal 8: Continue leadership development and high quality governance through consistent Board development and involvement with library planning</b></p> |
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### **Objectives:**

#### **8.1 Implement a consistent Board planning and measurement process**

### **Strategies:**

- Reevaluate library mission. Develop a memorable and catchy slogan/mission statement
- Hold an annual retreat/planning meeting for all board members to review assignments and Board direction

- Initiate better communications with the Friends of the Library. Invite a member of the Friends to attend Library Board meetings at least quarterly
- Ensure that all Library Board members join the Friends as an annual financial contribution to the library
- Stay informed of the status of implementation of Pennsylvania library board requirements (i.e. development of bylaws or rules of procedure, defining roles/responsibilities) to ensure the Library Board is in compliance
- Evaluate the Library Director vis-à-vis her responsibilities to the Library Board
- Investigate support for a dedicated library tax/millage
- Continue biannual reviews of this plan

## **Measuring and Evaluating the Plan**

Biannual reviews of *Future Focus 2004-2009* proved a successful technique for evaluating progress and celebrating accomplishments. It is recommended that reviews of *Future Focus Extended* continue to be made in January and July of each year of the plan's implementation. The results will continue to be reported on an ongoing basis to the Township Board of Commissioners and Library Board and staff as well as through the library's annual report, which is made available on the library and township's websites each year, to inform the community.