

ROLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2023



Approved by the Board of Trustees
February 2020

BACKGROUND & THANK YOU

To gather the information that provides a foundation for the strategic plan goals and objectives, the Roland Public Library Board of Trustees and staff used several different tools.

Community demographics were obtained from a variety of websites sources. Focus was to ensure that statistics are current, with no information predating 2017. Library staff completed the Edge Assessment offered through the State Library to determine if the technology resources that are currently available to library users meet the needs of the community and where improvements can be made.

Finally, a survey was conducted that covered various areas of library service, with a primary focus on programming. The survey was available online and at the library. The link to the questionnaire was sent out through the city and publicized on the city and library Facebook pages.

What was learned from evaluating the results is that the community appears to be generally satisfied with the library's customer service and offerings. There are, however, specific areas that need to be addressed, including marketing the resources that are available, offering a greater variety of program opportunities, and improving in-house technology.



The Library Board and staff would like to thank the city for helping to deliver the survey link to local residents. Also, a thank you to all those who took the time to offer valuable input by completing the survey.

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OUR COMMUNITY

The community of Roland was incorporated in 1891 and is located approximately 15 miles north of Ames in central Iowa. It covers 1.08 square miles in Story County. According to 2018 population estimates from the State Data Center, Roland's population is 1,271 and has remained steady since the 2010 census.



Roland is a relatively young community with a median age of 34.7 years, compared to the Iowa median age of 38 years. The largest age groups are birth to age 14, and 35-44, which indicates a predominance of young families. Twelve percent of the population 25 years of age and over have earned graduate degrees, 28.2 percent hold bachelor's degrees, and 15.3 percent have an associate's degree.

The estimated median household income in Roland from 2013-2017 was \$75,781. Iowa's median household during that same period was \$58,580. Estimated median home value in Roland is \$159,600, a number which has increased steadily over the past decade. The median home value in Iowa is \$153,281. Figures from 2019 show Roland's overall cost of living is 86.7, with healthcare being the costliest area at 126.3. For comparison, the national average for these scores is 100.



Roland shares its school district with Story City. The middle school is located in Roland; the elementary and high schools are in Story City. Roland-Story's K-12 enrollment for the 2018-19 school year was 1,097. According to figures from the Iowa Department of Education, 23 percent of Roland-Story students qualified for free and reduced lunches, compared to the statewide average of 43 percent.

Roland's Race Origin is predominately white, with 97.9 percent classified as white, 1.7 percent as two or more races, .4 percent Hispanic or Latino, and .4 percent American Indian and Alaska Native. Roland's founding fathers were Norwegians, and ties to the Scandinavian heritage remain strong. Germans, however, comprise the largest ancestry at 40.6%. Norwegians are second at 15.4 percent.

With its close proximity to Ames and Iowa State University, as well as Des Moines, Roland is considered a bedroom community. The largest local employers are Key Cooperative (agriculture-based), the Roland-Story School District (education) and Innovative Lighting (manufacturer). As a bedroom community, Roland's main street is occupied by only a few businesses, including a bank, Casey's, a tavern, and an accountant's office. Story City, six miles west of Roland, has a larger business district and several manufacturers, while Ames offers employment opportunities at ISU as well as the Iowa DOT, and in the fields of healthcare, food service and retail. For shopping and entertainment, most Roland residents drive to Ames.

About 38 percent of Roland's workforce is employed in management, business, science and arts occupations; 24.5 percent are in sales and office occupations; 17.4 percent are in production, transportation and material moving; 11.3 percent in service occupations; and 9.4 percent in natural resources, construction and maintenance occupations. Just over 87 percent use a personal vehicle to drive alone to work, with the average commute time of 22.6 minutes. Roland's overall poverty rate in the 2013-17 timeframe was 4.6 percent, with the majority of those being female householders with no husband present. The local poverty rate is significantly lower than Iowa's rate of 11.67 percent.

The school district seems to be the strongest tie that binds the community of Roland. There are, however, several organizations and service groups that welcome participation for those wanting to be involved, including scouts, 4-H, youth sports, Roland Area Development Corporation, Legion and Legion Auxiliary, Friends 'n Service, a historical society, Kiwanis and two Lutheran churches.

OUR LIBRARY

The Roland Public Library first opened its doors to serve the community and surrounding area in 1983. The original library was located in a 1,500 sq. ft. building purchased by the city for a nominal amount. Much of the initial collection was acquired from the West Des Moines Library. While several of the city leaders serving at that time were not optimistic about the future of a library in Roland, the community proved them wrong by strongly supporting all the library's offerings, evidenced by growing circulation and programming numbers in the ensuing years.

By the late 1990s and early 2000s, the library had clearly outgrown its cramped facility, and discussion began about relocating. In 2009, the city acquired a larger building that formerly served as a hardware store on Roland's Main Street. With this opportunity, usable space immediately increased to 3,500 sq. ft. The building also included a 1,200 sq. ft. unfinished backroom addition that was renovated in 2017 and now serves as a program room.

The Roland Library currently employs a full-time library director, a part-time children's librarian/programming director, and two library clerks. The library is open 51 hours per week, Monday thru Saturday. Along with a collection of reading materials and dvds for all ages, the library offers five public access computers, wi-fi, a private meeting/study room, and an extensive program schedule. Outreach services for home delivery and early literacy programs are available, upon request.



Through its 37 year history, the Roland Library has seen many shifts in library trends. Services offered by the State Library, such as the Bridges Consortium and Gale databases, have made it possible to smoothly transition into the digital age and offer resources that our patrons need at an affordable

cost. While customers still look to the library for books and movies, it has also become more of a gathering place for people to meet, exchange ideas, and build community relationships.

ROLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT (approved 6/19)

"To provide access to the universe of information through promotion of reading, literacy, technology and local programming that best serves the community."

SELECTED SERVICE RESPONSES

Connect to the Online World: Public Internet Access. Residents will have high speed access to the digital world with no unnecessary restrictions or fees to ensure that everyone can take advantage of the every-growing resources and services available through the Internet.

Celebrate Diversity: Cultural Awareness. Residents will have programs and services that promote appreciation and understand of their personal heritage and the heritage of others in the community.

Create Young Readers: Early Literacy. Children from birth to five will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write, and listen.

Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning. Residents will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.



Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces. Residents will have safe and welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and ready and will have open and accessible virtual spaces that support networking.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal #1 - Community Presence

The library will continue to grow its presence in Roland and help build a sense of community.

Objective A - The library will actively participate in any long-range planning conducted by the city and development corporation to identify community needs and determine specific areas in which the library can serve those needs.

Objective B - The library will continue to offer popular family events, such as the Monster Mash and Holiday Open House, and will see attendance at these events increase annually. At least one similar "holiday theme" event will be added each year.

Objective C - Library offerings will be promoted outside the building with participation in at least three community events annually. These events may include Scandinavian Days, the Sesquicentennial, Farmers' Market, etc.

Objective D - The library will collaborate with other local organizations at least four times each year on community-based projects and events.

Objective E - Library programming and services will be marketed through fliers, school announcements, LED sign messages, social media, and library and city website postings to reach as many residents as possible. Fliers will be displayed at the library, post office, City Hall, local businesses and churches, as well as at libraries in nearby communities. The library will see an increase of five percent annually in the number of library website visitors and social media followers.

Objective F - Staff will develop an electronic newsletter to be sent out monthly beginning by October 2020.

Goal #2 - Internet Access

The library will provide equipment and technology needed for residents to have access to quality high speed internet service in comfortable surroundings.

Objective A - Staff and board will identify and budget for computers/devices, including printer(s), that will best serve the needs of the library's patrons. System operations will be assessed annually by staff and board based on patron satisfaction measured through an annual survey.

Objective B - The library will identify and purchase hardware and software needed for the public access computers and wi-fi network to operate at an acceptable performance level (deep freeze, routers, etc). At least 80 percent of survey respondents will rate the quality of their experience with the public access computers and wi-fi as "very good" or "excellent".

Objective C - The library will provide software on its public access computers to meet the needs of patrons. This could include photo/video editing software, specific programs designed for persons with disabilities, etc. Customer needs will be determined through the annual survey.

Objective D - The director and board will determine minimum requirements for internet speed based on patron input and industry standards, and contact available internet providers to select the telecommunications package that best meets the needs of library users. Bandwidth needs will be evaluated annually and adjusted accordingly.

Objective E - All staff will understand the configuration of the wi-fi network and have the knowledge to troubleshoot basic issues that arise during all hours of operation. To meet this objective, staff training will be conducted at least two times per year.

Objective F - Staff and board will select and maintain furnishings for wi-fi and public access computer users that will be comfortable and functional. At least 90 percent of survey respondents will rate furnishings as "acceptable" or "very acceptable".

Goal #3 - Programming

The library will provide a range of programming and activities that meet the needs and interests of residents of all ages. Programs will include weekly early literacy activities, a variety of regularly scheduled after school programs, a summer reading program, and special evening and weekend events. Programming will be evaluated annually with a customer satisfaction survey. At least 85 percent of survey respondents will rate program offerings and experiences as "very good" or "excellent".

Objective A - Regular weekly programming will build on literacy skills and the STEAM curriculum. These types of programs will be held at least three times each week for preschool and school age children. The schedules for these programs will be determined using data from the annual survey conducted by the library.

Objective B - At least 6 programs will be offered annually that explore diversity and international cultures. Examples of such programs include holiday celebrations and guest speakers.

Objective C - At least three programs will be conducted annually to promote the importance of community service. Books to Action and service outreach activities are examples.

Objective D - At least 6 programs will be offered annually that will specifically focus on adult learning. Examples of such programming include an Adulting 101 series, advanced craft workshops, and author talks.

Objective E - Collection development will include books, DVDs and other resources that give residents the opportunity to build on the information and topics presented at programs. These items will be displayed and promoted during the related programs. A minimum of six items related to the program topic will be available for customers to check out following the program.

Goal #4 - Online Resources

The library will encourage and promote use of digital databases and services available through the State Library, including Bridges and Gale. The board will be updated by the director when changes are made to these resources or other databases become available. With a focus on actively promoting these resources, usage of the databases and Bridges will increase five percent annually.

Objective A - Staff training will be held at least two times per year to ensure that assistance is available during all operational hours for residents using these resources. Through training, staff will understand the valuable resources available through the online databases and will be confident in promoting the service to customers.

Examples:

- Promotion of digital applications, such as Gale resources and Transparent Language, will encourage cultural exploration.
- Students preparing for standardized tests can be encouraged to use the practice tests available through Brainfuse.
- Students working on research projects will find Credo is a valuable resource.
- Customers wanting to learn/improve job ready career skills can be directed to the tutorials on using Office products available through the Adult Learning section in Brainfuse.
- "Books and Authors" is available to library staff as a readers advisory tool.

Objective B - Staff and board will actively promote the library's digital offerings available through Bridges, Gale and Brainfuse. Monthly postings on social media will highlight these services, and at least one presentation will be made each year to a community organization. One-on-one customer training will also be offered on these resources, as needed.

Objective C - All staff will have the knowledge to assist patrons who are using their own devices to access the library's digital offerings, including Bridges and other databases.

The library board and director will evaluate this strategic plan each November. A customer satisfaction survey addressing the objectives included in this plan will be conducted each October. An assessment of this plan will be based on meeting the measurable objectives and the quantitative and qualitative data taken from the survey.