



# UPPER DARBY TOWNSHIP & Sellers Memorial Free Public Library

## Strategic Plan 2022-2025

### Introduction

To further engage with the community and to effectively position itself for the future, The Upper Darby Township & Sellers Memorial Free Public Library has developed a three-year strategic plan for the fiscal years 2022 through 2025.

### Process

The Strategic Planning Committee gathered as many questions as possible for the survey from the board, staff and Friends of the Library. The questions were grouped into the following categories: Library Services, Facilities, Customer Service, Diversity/Equity/Inclusion and Finance and added to an online tool called Ideaboardz for brainstorming then voting. The top questions from each group were selected to be in the survey that was ultimately shared with the public. We promoted the survey online through the library webpages, local community online groups, a table at Greenhorn Gardens Mother’s Day Pop-up, and it was shared by local school districts. Print copies were available at the library buildings and the Watkins Avenue Senior Center. The board would like to thank our community residents and partners, including the Mayor, for sharing the survey as well.

Strategic Plan Questions					
Library Services +		Facilities +		Customer Service +	
Are you a resident of Upper Darby Township (Upper Darby, Drexel Hill, Clifton Heights etc.) +12	How often do you visit the library (under normal circumstances)? +8	Are you satisfied with the days/times of library access? • Yes • No (If not, what days/times would be best for you?) +3	Which Upper Darby Township Library do you visit most (under normal circumstances)? +3	If you could change one thing about the Upper Darby Township Libraries what would it be? +1	How do you contact the library for information? +5
Have you personally benefitted from the use of Upper Darby Township Libraries? +1	What 3 words come to mind when you think about the Upper Darby Township Libraries? +2	If you do not visit the library often under normal circumstances, what is your reason? +0	Should we have another library in the township? +2	Do you use reference services at the Upper Darby Libraries? +3	Do you seek out particular staff for help with library services? If so, who? +1
How do you find out about Library events? +8	Which areas have you attended programs or checked out items for (select all that apply). +4	Do you feel comfortable accessing library resources during COVID? +3	Do you feel the libraries' online events adequately fulfill your programming needs? +1	Are you a member of the Friends of the Library? +2	Do you donate books or money to the Friends of the Library? +1
What types of materials do you like to use from the library? (Select all that apply) +5	How can the Upper Darby Township Libraries be most beneficial to you? +1	Were you aware of the libraries' COVID policies prior to completing this survey? +0	Do you feel that the library is adequately adhering to COVID policy requirements and recommendations by the State/Township? +3	Please indicate how you feel about the following statements: strongly embedded into the community, improve the quality of life, good value, beneficial to my family, will be used by us in the next year. +5	What would/did/does bring you to the library? +5



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The Strategic Planning Committee would have liked to further the process with focus groups, however, due to limitations for indoor activities during COVID we opted not to move forward with those. Therefore, this plan will serve as a building block for a more comprehensive strategic plan beginning in 2025. Additional input into the plan was from board members, discussions during board meetings, and continuing or expanding services and activities that have been beneficial to the community and for the library staff.

### **Survey Results Overview**

272 people responded to the survey which was run between May 3<sup>rd</sup> and June 13<sup>th</sup> 2021. It should be noted that the library buildings were still primarily closed due to COVID at the start of this survey. Of those, 263 were Upper Darby Residents. The majority of those who responded primarily use Sellers Library (76%), then Municipal (13%) and Primos (11%).

The largest use of the library is still checking out materials (86%). Physical Books are the most widely used by survey participants, receiving 87% of the responses, followed by Museum passes (36%), DVDs (29%), and audiobooks and Electronic books, (both at 26%). Faxing/Coping/Printing/Scanning services (27%) is the next biggest use of the library followed by attending programs for children (22%) or adults (21%). Some of the lower ranked usage of the library were meeting with a client or tutor, it should be noted that this could be related to recent closures of the library due to the COVID19 pandemic.

The public is finding out about events at the library through a variety of sources. Online promotion through social media was highly rated by 38% of respondents, followed by the library website (37%), flyers in the library (35%), the library newsletter (30%), the Delaware County Library System's online event calendar (29%), and Library Staff (25%). Several respondents suggested that the library do additional marketing to improve awareness of library events.



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The majority of respondents (88%) are satisfied with the library hours. Some suggested that the library consider additional weekend hours. There was a request for a book drop in the comments provided. This was also requested in other questions. A few comments were related to the availability of library services during COVID.

When asked what the library should change or improve, there were some comments on the space of the library buildings needing an update and providing more private space. 88% of respondents would support a campaign to raise funds for building renovation. Other comments from survey participants were around expanding selections of materials for books and ebooks or programs for a variety of populations: children, teens, young adults, adults. Due to the timing of the survey there were also several comments on the reopening of the library buildings and library hours.

When asked if the library should go fine free the majority of respondents responded no, 71% vs 29%.

Regarding community events, the respondents would love to see the library out in the community more. Some suggestions were Farmer's Markets, Greenhorn Gardens events, Upper Darby LGBTQ, Fire Prevention events, school programs, and reaching the home school community, International festival, job fairs, community days, etc. There were also suggestions for additional events at the library such as author readings/signings or talks (43%), or seminars (36%).

Future programs that interested the respondents are a Farmer's Market (71%), learning new skills (51%), history of Upper Darby/Delaware County/Pennsylvania (45%), a café (42%), and circulation of alternate materials (37%). There were suggestions for using the outdoor space for exercise programs such as yoga or tai chi, having a book club, gaming, or finance/tax related instruction.

A majority of respondents (68%) would like to see additional meeting spaces that are accessible to community groups. About 15% stated that they have had



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barriers to access, whether that was through the lack of elevators or the ability to navigate with wheelchairs or strollers or simply hours that don't work for them. Again, there were requests for book drops. There were also comments of accessibility to the library buildings for those who do not drive. Additional comments were around closures due to the pandemic.

When looking at the underserved population the respondents answered: the disabled community, the immigrant community, seniors, Black and Latino people, the Bywood/Stonehurst/Cardington sections of Upper Darby as well as the Drexel Hill/Garrettford/Aronimink sections. Approximately 9% of respondents speak a second language at home.

Over half of the respondents have utilized the curbside pick-up service during the pandemic (51%). Of those who attended virtual programming, the activities for kids and crafting/knitting clubs were the most enjoyed. Respondents also enjoyed the e-book access.

The board would like to thank the survey respondents for their time and great ideas for the future of The Upper Darby Township and Sellers Memorial Free Public Library.



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*& Sellers Memorial Free Public Library*

## Mission

The Upper Darby Township & Sellers Memorial Free Public Library serves the community without exception by providing access to books, materials, and programs to support lifelong education, personal growth, and creativity.

## Vision Statement

Connecting you to literacy, entertainment, and lifelong learning since 1930

## History

The Upper Darby Township and Sellers Memorial Free Public Library system dates from the 1930s. Beginning with a small collection of 1300 gift books in two rented rooms, the library has grown to a library system with three branches and a collection of over 118,00 books, magazines, audiobooks, music CDs, and DVDs available for borrowing. Highlights:

- 1930** Planning committee first meets in May. By September, the library opens at 57 1/2 North 69th Street. The collection moves to the McClatchy building in October.
- 1931** Library moves into its new home at the Municipal Building, located at Long Lane and Garrett Road.
- 1933** Sarah Sellers, last resident of the Sellers Family property known as Hoodland, dies, leaving the property to the township for a library.
- 1934** The Sellers Library Board is established and assumes joint responsibility with Upper Darby Township Library Board for both libraries.



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**1935** Hoodland is renovated and opens that summer as a public library. The Children's Library is located on the second floor; the Adult Library on the first floor.

The Upper Darby Township Library in the Municipal Building and the Sellers Memorial Library are formally combined into the Upper Darby Township and Sellers Memorial Free Public Library.

Sellers Library designated as the Main Library; Municipal Library is named the Municipal Branch.



**1953** Bookmobile service begins. Starting with a trailer pulled by a station wagon, the service grows steadily through the 60s and 70s.

**1957** Upper Darby Township assumes responsibility for the buildings and grounds of the Sellers property from the Sellers Board.

A unified Upper Darby Township & Sellers Memorial Free Public Library Board of Directors is established

**1975** The Patrick J. Martin Wing of the Sellers Library opens, housing the Adult Library and work areas.

**1977** Municipal Branch is renovated.





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**1980** Primos Branch Library opens in the Westbrook Park-Primos-Secane area of the township. Its first home is in the former offices of the Nu-Way Trash Removal Corporation.



**1981** The Delaware County Library System is established and the Sellers/Main Library is designated an Area Resource Center.

**1983** Bookmobile discontinued. At its retirement, the bookmobile maintained a collection of over 4,000 volumes and visited every part of the township.

**1985** The first computers are installed in the libraries, used for office and administrative work only.

**1989** The traditional card catalog is replaced by DELPHI, an integrated computerized catalog. Patrons can now see what every Delaware County library owns.

Primos Branch moves into the closed Primos Elementary school. The branch remains here even after the school reopened in 1992. The School and Library develop a unique relationship that lasts even after the library moves to new quarters.

**1994** Sellers/Main receives one of the first public access Internet stations in the county from DCLS. By 2007, the UD libraries as a system offered 38 public Internet access computers, 9 computers for word processing, desktop publishing and spreadsheets, and wireless Internet access at all three libraries.



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- 1995** UD's first computerized circulation system is installed. Over the next few years, the three branches move from stand-alone systems to networked systems, and finally in 2002, to a fully integrated real time county wide circulation system.
- 2004** Primos Library relocates to its current home, the renovated Westbrook Park-Primos-Secane Fire house.
- 2006** The library begins a fundraising effort to renovate the old Sellers Barn, largely unused since the retirement of the bookmobile.
- 2011** The Municipal Branch moves from its old location on the ground floor of the Municipal Building to its new home at 501 Bywood Ave. This location, the site of the former Temple Israel synagogue, includes a parking lot and a community meeting room.



- 2021** Upper Darby township staff painted and fixed the old Sellers Barn and planted trees around the property in celebration of Arbor Day.





## Planned Actions & Expected Outcomes

- **Library Services**

- **Planned Actions:**

- The library will pursue additional avenues for marketing library events.
- The library will increase offerings of author readings/signings, talks, and/or seminars.
- The library will increase offerings for entertainment and lifelong learning.
- The library will continue to solicit ideas from the community on what they would like to see offered.

- **Expected Outcome:** *Programs offered by the library are well attended and meet community needs.*

- **Planned Actions:**

- The library will purchase book drops, whether interior or exterior.
- The library will consider alternate locations for material circulation.
- The library will consider alternate approaches to hours or staff allocation to meet patron needs.

- **Expected Outcome:** *Library patrons have the ability to access and return materials within their schedule.*



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- **Planned Actions:**
  - The library will expand workforce development efforts with the community.
  - The library will seek partnerships with additional community groups to offer resume reviews, interview assistance and presentation skills.
  - The library will partner with local colleges and trade schools to build partnerships and expand resources to community members.
- **Expected Outcomes:** *The library expands programs to help patrons build lifelong skills.*
- **Planned Actions:**
  - The library will continue to evaluate collections to match the interests of the community.
  - The library will expand access to electronic library materials.
  - The library will expand offerings of museum passes.
  - The library budget will incrementally increase spending on library materials over this three-year plan in efforts to attain a 12% materials expenditure to meet state recommendations.
- **Expected Outcome:** *The library expands acquisitions, cataloging, and materials access to meet patron needs.*



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- **Facilities**

- **Planned Actions:**

- The library will pursue funding for a site survey to evaluate compliance, safety, and effectiveness of buildings for the community.
    - The library will pursue ADA compliance in library spaces, while preserving the history of the library buildings.
    - The library will pursue community partnerships for sites and outreach.
    - The library will provide a variety of spaces and furnishings for multiple uses, such as study, meetings, instruction, and community events.

- **Expected Outcome:** *The library buildings and spaces for meetings/events are safe and accessible for all.*

- **Planned Actions:**

- The library will pursue funding for a site survey to evaluate use, comfort, and modernization of buildings for the community.
    - The library will pursue eco-friendly and sustainable sourcing for all planned facilities maintenance.
    - The library will further engage the community for artwork representing the various residents of Upper Darby.

- **Expected Outcome:** *The library is updated and operating to meet the current community needs.*



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- **Customer Service**

- **Planned Actions:**

- The library will investigate additional options for materials pick-up to continue to meet patron needs.
    - The library will consider expanding audio/video requirements to make programs available both in person and online.
    - The library will consider bringing library materials to check-out at community and pop-up events.

- **Expected Outcomes:** *The library adjusts to meet the changing needs of the community.*

- **Planned Actions:**

- The library will continue to invest in the growth and development of our library staff.
    - The library will offer professional development opportunities through the county, state, and national library organizations.
    - The library will offer sustainable benefits and competitive wages to retain current staff and recruit new team members.

- **Expected Outcomes:** *Stellar staff provide excellent service to all library patrons.*

- **Planned Actions:**

- The library will continue to survey the community for their input into library services.
    - The library will invest in tools to increase communication with the community, partners, and potential donors or funders.

- **Expected Outcomes:** *The library continuously engages with the community to plan for future growth.*



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- **Diversity/Equity/Inclusion**

- **Planned Actions:**

- The library will be present at additional community events to further engage various community groups. (Community Days, International Festival, Schools, Upper Darby LGBTQ Pride, etc.)
    - The library will continue with efforts on County wide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committees and implement best practices internally and with the community.
    - The library will work towards ADA compliance in library spaces.

- **Expected Outcome:** *The library serves as an open and welcome place for all community members.*

- **Planned Actions:**

- The library will evaluate costs for expansion of home bound programs.
    - The library will further increase partnerships with community groups to meet underrepresented patrons.
    - The library will expand signage and offerings in languages representative of the community.

- **Expected Outcome:** *The library serves the diversity of needs of our community members.*



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- **Finance**

- **Planned Actions:**

- The library will pursue an annual fund campaign for generating income for building renovation.
    - The library will pursue utilizing outdoor space for fundraising activity. Ex: Farmer's Market; Vendor Days
    - The library will pursue additional funding streams to expand programmatic offerings.

- **Expected Outcome:** *The library increases fundraising efforts to further meet the changing needs of the community.*

- **Planned Actions:**

- The library will work with the township, county, and state on available grant/funding opportunities.
    - The library will continue to partner with the Friends of the Library on fundraising efforts.

- **Expected Outcome:** *The library maximizes the key relationships to secure funding to meet community needs.*

