



STRATEGIC PLAN

July 2025 - June 2029

Introduction

In the years since the expiring strategic plan was created, our library, and our community, have endured and emerged from a global pandemic that has transformed much of the way we deliver service and the way the community uses our spaces. While we enjoy incredible community support locally, cultural and educational institutions like ours face mounting challenges nationally. Such challenges have strengthened our resolve to remain dedicated to our guiding principles of being a welcoming place, and protecting access to reliable information and to resources for discretionary reading, listening, and viewing which reflect a variety of lived experiences, and, yes, which might sometimes challenge one's way of thinking and, perhaps, expand one's worldview.

The current plan of service reaffirms our mission to deliver engaging resources to educate, entertain, and empower our community; our vision of a community that is resilient and collaborative; and the values that guide our work, including protecting intellectual freedom, demonstrating a love of learning, and cultivating meaningful relationships in all we do. A dedicated committee of library workers and trustees, informed by input from the community, developed this plan. Meant to be a proactive guide for our work for the next several years, this plan builds upon the framework of its predecessor, and envisions expanding on our successes of broadening our reach into the community, leading in sustainability efforts, and innovating in our delivery of library services and materials.

Ike Pulver, Library Director



Methodology

During the Winter of 2025, the Board of Trustees and staff of the Saratoga Springs Public Library reviewed the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan to assess progress toward meeting the goals it outlined, and to begin reflecting on our direction for the next several years. A Strategic Planning Committee, comprised of library leadership and two elected trustees was formed. Because it not only outlines specific activities, but also allows for areas of innovation, flexibility, and serendipity, the committee collectively decided to readopt the framework of the expiring plan, and to renew the library's commitment to the mission, vision, values and strategic priorities it identified.

The community – those living within and outside of our service area, and library users and non-users -- provided feedback in a survey which was distributed by a variety of methods, including via email to library newsletter subscribers, postings on library social media channels, inside the library, and through outreach services. A separate survey and series of conversations provided library staff an opportunity to provide candid feedback about library offerings.

The Strategic Planning Committee used the data collected in the surveys and feedback from staff and community conversations as a guide when identifying activities that align with our strategic priorities for the next planning period. This plan is the product of that process.



Our Mission, Vision, and Values



Mission

Delivering resources and experiences that engage, entertain, educate, and empower our entire community.



Vision

Our vision is a resilient community empowered by collaboration, engagement, and learning.



Values

- **Sustainability:** Practicing and promoting environmental stewardship, economic feasibility, and social equity through engagement, education, action, and transparency.
- **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** Celebrating differences and welcoming all into a safe and nurturing environment.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Leveraging resources and offering more integrated services within the Library and across the community.
- **Community:** Enabling connections, promoting civic engagement, and improving the quality of life.
- **Accessibility:** Protecting intellectual freedom and personal privacy while offering universal access to collections, services, events, and knowledge both within and beyond the building.
- **Learning:** Empowering life-long learning and all forms of literacy.
- **Devotion:** Visibly demonstrating a love of learning, sharing, and cultivating meaningful relationships in all we do.
- **Innovation:** Encouraging creativity and adapting to emerging needs in forward-thinking ways.

Strategic Priorities

Universally Accessible

Outcome:

Offer something for everyone within the community and ensure spaces and services exist for all types of needs.



Community Leadership

Outcome:

Through engagement, example setting, and sharing best practices, the library will be able to help the community.



Community Convener

Outcome:

SSPL will actively seek to elevate the quality of life in the Saratoga Springs area by bringing groups, agencies, and community members together.



Library as Place

Outcome:

SSPL will evolve as a destination within the community, providing an environment that delights users and improves their quality of life.



Universally Accessible

Online Engagement

Provide more opportunities to engage users and highlight issues important to the community in our virtual spaces.

Outreach Services

Invest in and expand the library's outreach services and capabilities focusing on those with the highest needs and lowest access in terms of materials, programs, and technologies.

Branching Out

Evaluate options for offering satellite locations to improve access to library services.

Comprehensive Messaging

Ensure members of our community are kept informed of our services, collections, programs, and general library information in a manner that best meets their needs.

Inclusivity

Establish high standards of accessibility around services, collections, facilities, and programs.



Universally Accessible



- Way-finding (new signage with consideration of color, location, and language).
- Staying up to date with the latest ADA recommendations/mandates for web-based information.
- New furniture that is easy to move, keep clean and can be used by most.
- A lighting study that considers how we use our space now and into the future.
- Hire a consultant to assist with the building expansion project.
- Evaluate material usage and collection development policies, looking to best align community/user needs and wants with collection management approaches and policies.
- Experiment with new times and interests to meet the needs of working adults (with and without kids, ages 18-seniors).
- Online parking permit application/self-registration.
- Create a marketing committee to prioritize strategies for determining how to reach everyone in the community.
- Highlight staff-curated content on our website and through social media channels.

Community Leadership

Participation

Explore avenues for which staff members might be uniquely suited to participate on committees, boards, or working groups in the community and at the library.



Literacy

The library is seen as the leader in the community for literacy (e.g., reading, language, digital, financial) by providing access to resources, programming, and training to encourage life-long learning.

Disaster Preparedness

The library is a key player or organizer in efforts to develop contingency plans around future community crises, such as pandemics, that may affect the broader area.

Trusted Source

Library is seen positively as sharing information and engaging the community around issues where the library is playing a leading role: e.g., Sustainability, DEI, and Community

Employment Practices

The library is seen as a model employer in terms of its compensation, benefits, and employment practices.

Community Leadership



- Reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 in alignment with the Saratoga Springs City Government Climate Action Plan.
- Increase the number of times staff speak or volunteer (and not just table) for Civic Organizations, Community Events, and the like.
- Be invited to participate in working groups, government, and non-profit boards and committees.
- Be ahead of trends and mandates -create learning opportunities for staff and the public.
- Ensure staff feel safe, supported, and informed.



Community Convener

Partnerships

Community partners see the library as a partner, but also a venue through which to connect with other agencies and potential partners.



Connections

Provide opportunities for social engagement and civic discourse on current topics and local interest.

Belonging

The library is a place for everyone, individually or together.

Community Convener



- Create opportunities for affinity groups to come together (e.g., History Fair, Preschool Fair, etc.)
- Expand the Teen-Led programming and services model to ensure we remain relevant to everyone within our community.
- Evaluate existing partnerships for opportunities to expand and deepen connections.



Library as Place

Interior Spaces

Short-term solutions while not losing sight of long-term possibilities.



Outdoor Spaces

Take a deep look at the current usage and availability of outdoor space surrounding the library, including the parking lot.

Welcoming

Create a warm and inviting space throughout the building with an eye towards sustainable building practices, accessibility, and comfort.

Digital Divide

Meet the evolving technological needs of the community and work to limit the impacts of the digital divide in the community.

Library as Place



- Follow through on our current building renovation and remodeling plans.
- Task lighting.
- Loud space for adults (like Teen Room or Children's Room).
- Update technology for virtual/hybrid meetings.
- Bring a piece of the children's room and history collection to the first floor.
- Tailor the outside spaces to meet the needs of the patrons and staff who use them.
- Provide open-to-all services like Read to Recovery, Free Period Products, and the like.
- Continue to review the parking permit system.



PUBLIC LIBRARY



THANKS

Board of Trustees

Katie Capelli, Heather Crocker, Terence Diggory, Frank Brady,
Carol Daggs, Jean Fei, and Nancy Luther



THANKS

Strategic Planning Committee

Katie Capelli, Jean Fei, Issac Pulver, Jennifer Ferriss, Catherine Brenner, Jamie Chabot, Donald Flinton, Kelly McCombs, Trevor Oakley, and Ric Taras

Appendix

Survey Results



Staff



Community

