



Report to: Stratford Public Library Board
Meeting Date: January 7, 2020
From: Julia Merritt, CEO
Subject: Nov 26th Strategy Session; distilled

Attached is a shortened version of the information generated at the November 26th strategy session, for use in ongoing Board conversation.

Below is a tentative schedule for Board conversations.

January – Based on the attached document, in advance of the January 7th meeting, each Board member selects:

1. their top 5 priorities in the SWOT category.
2. their top 3 priorities in the Action Ideation section.

Please rank each selection in order, using 1 as the highest priority.
At the January 7th meeting, these selections will be collated and discussed.

February – The Board will link its priorities to the Strategic Plan, Mission, and Vision.

March – The Board will review the work completed in January/February, and conduct or determine further discussion.

April – Potentially, 1-2 half-day sessions to

May – Receive and incorporate information from the CULC Study Tour.

June – The Board is able to articulate clear position statements about the priorities and role of the Board; can direct necessary staff action through the Strategic Plan.

Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats

Strengths

- Public support
- City provides significant support
- Free services
- Library is agile, adaptable, incorporates lots of tech already
- Knowledge is still powerful
- Libraries are unifying institutions
- Well managed
- Strong brand; valued partner
- Locally funded/ supported

Weakness

- Free services
- Reliance of 1 political partner for majority funding
- Vulnerable people struggle to access library and need more support
- Community silos, isolated groups
- No current capacity to grow
- Public lack of knowledge of library
- Less disposable income
- % budget/available funds for new technology leadership
- Underutilized by affluent groups
- Aging infrastructure
- Marketing and advocacy necessary

Opportunities

- People need to connect
- New vibrant facility
- Advocacy
- Stratford is a growing community

- Capture target audience for companies access to customer
- Automated processes
- Greater demand services
- Most trusted brand in the world
- New real partnerships
- Libraries play core role in connecting community
- Virtual spaces are new ways to grow
- An entrepreneurial outlook
- New Canadians
- Libraries becoming more service based

Threats

- Provincial cuts to municipalities
- Aging population
- Decline in volunteerism
- Amazon effect
- Assumption we will always exist
- Low # of cardholders
- Political
- Lack of board interest
- Publishers view library as enemy
- Greater demand on services
- Economic downturn = service cut
- Decline in avail. # of customers
- Metrics used to measure success
- Climate change
- Rise of virtual services reduces case for additional space
- Automation trends make libraries a financial burden

Action Ideation

How might SPL become more prepared for the future? How might SPL continue to play a leading role in servicing and enriching our community a decade from now?

Advocacy and Community Development with the Board becoming more political and taking community leadership role by:

- Creating lobbying/advocacy plan
- Board building political/community support
- Researching community needs and gaps
- Leading and championing the cooperation of multiple organizations, pool \$
- Strengthening city ties
- Hiring staff for future items e.g. business development officer
- Investing in digitally sophisticating the community, invest in entrepreneurial efforts, pilot new initiatives, incubate successes
- Defining aspects of community agenda to be the answer or partner to community question
- Become community life changing force
- Engaging and motivating gen z as future tax/community payers

Services

- Identify/develop offsite locations for services
- Continue to offer some unique programming and celebrate and market it and its success
- Having more volunteers in the library helping staff
- Staff training; leadership role; cutting edge
- Don't fall into the trap of "digital everything" while still being agile/responsible
- Servicing people where they are or where they want to be serviced
- Provide digital and in-person connection points
- Library 2.0; Robots, digital AI
- Shelf ready growth plans

Funding

- Obtain outside monies through fundraising, fee for service, partnerships
- Build out scenarios re: fundraising goals and tactics



PCIN

- Expand PCIN roles and activities

Infrastructure

- Larger facility to accommodate more people, be accessible
- Open a beer garden/coffee shop. Patio as a destination

Policy Development

- Define, track and measure a new set of relevant KPI's; understand our data and how to share