Stratford Public Library Strategic Plan 2023-2026

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Introduction

Welcome Letter From Krista Robinson, Interim CEO

Over the past three years, one thing that has become evident is that the world has changed. How people learn, work, play, and live is evolving and Stratford Public Library understands the importance of changing with our community so that we can continue to provide library services that are relevant and have a positive impact on the lives of the residents of Stratford.

By following this new roadmap, we will deliver inclusive and sustainable services that respond to the needs of our community. We will further our efforts by using the most meaningful data to make informed decisions with community belonging as our goal. By building partnerships we will be able to grow, both in our services and space. Drawing on insightful feedback from the community, and rich feedback from staff and the library board, the development of this plan was truly a team effort. Thank you to everyone who took the time to share your thoughts and vision for the future of your library.

With SPL's new Strategic Plan, your library will continue to be a *place where hope and wonder fly*.

This is our commitment to you.

Mapping Our Strategic Plan

At Stratford Public Library (SPL), we have appreciated the trust the Stratford community has had in us and our ability to meet their needs and foster connections. Our dedicated team has embraced this trust with care and demonstrated adaptability. Remaining focused on our community and their needs while striving for steady progress has kept us diligent in our efforts and creative in our approach to improve the Library.

This cycle of strategic planning comes at a time of significant change and growth for SPL—we face ever-expanding demand for our programs and services. The Library has been creative in the ways we have met expanding community needs with limited resources, however as demand continues to increase, we need intentional and efficient growth. Looking ahead to the future, we are advocating for and striving towards sustainable, active growth to launch us forward as leaders in the Stratford community.

The Process of Engagement and Planning

We sought out the voices of community members, program participants, community partners, staff and volunteers through stakeholder labs and a survey to gather key insights. We asked questions to understand how people see the current and future direction of the Library, the challenges facing the sector, and the role and opportunities for the Library both now and in the future.

Equipped with insights from our stakeholders and a shared understanding of the reason we exist, Library Leadership and Board members began the collaborative and consensus-building process of co-creating the strategic plan.

Our strategic plan is important and will help us connect the work that we do every day to the wider picture of the organization's goals and purpose. The strategic plan will map out the pathways of where we want to go in the future so that we can begin to plan for how we will get there.

Who We Are

Mission

We are an equitable, safe, and welcoming community where everyone can explore, learn, create, connect, and be inspired.

Vision

We are a place where hope and wonder fly.

We envision a Library which connects people; inspires learning, literacy, and curiosity; and sparks change for a better community.

Strategic Directions

- Align Space with Demand
- Reach Out and Bring In
- Lead Grounded Practice
- Build Sustainable Partnerships to Expand Capacity
- Intentionally Support our Team

The Stratford Public Library is stretching in many directions with the guidance and support of committed team members and a resilient community. In recent years, societal shifts have greatly influenced the delivery of the Library's programs, the collections offered, and the ways the Library is accessible to the community. This need for flexibility and adaptability is rapidly increasing and the Library is ready to plan for the future with agility at the forefront of our minds.

Emerging from the strategic planning process are five directions that will guide the Library to a sustainable future of continually supporting the Stratford community as best we can. These directions give us a broad horizon and provide us space for adaptability in a constantly changing environment.

Align Space with Demand/ Match Space to Demand Needs

When faced with societal shifts and rapidly changing needs, SPL stepped up to support and provide care to the Stratford community. Community members find the Library to be a strong source of joy, an important way to connect, and a resource to meet everyday needs. With increasing demand in the community, SPL will plan for enough space to accommodate the programs, services and resources offered, with room for the Library to continue to grow in the future. This is a vital component to the future of the Library as we continue to intentionally nurture community connection in all we do.

Prioritized Objective:

- Fundraising feasibility study

Possible Other Objectives:

- Connect with the city for a commitment (or not) to be included in the Grand Trunk Plan
- Develop a temporary satellite location (for collection and/or programs)
- Complete shelf ready plans
- Build a case for more space

Reach Out and Bring In

The Library plays a vital role in creating spaces for all members of the Stratford community to be welcomed as they are. This is embedded all throughout the Library—our collections, our programs, our team and our mission. As a community-focused organization, we take the sentiment of feeling at home in our space sincerely. To ensure all members of the community see themselves reflected as part of the Library, we will prioritize equitable community outreach and communications by intentionally connecting with our community where they are at.

Prioritized Objective:

- Enhanced marketing strategy

Possible Other Objectives:

- Programming strategy that looks to the future
- Redefine performance metrics to reflect true impact
- Reach out to non-users
- Plan 1 year at a time for programs to be mindful about inclusion

Lead Grounded Practice

To be a voice in the community advocating for equity*, we need to lead by example. The many ways we interact with the community supports the idea that we have an opportunity to be a role model in this space. As a leader in the Stratford community, we will strive to become role models for equitable practices, diversity and equity advocacy, and environmental sustainability. On our journey to better represent the voices of Stratford, we will strive to achieve an undeniable sense of belonging for all members of the community at the Library.

Equity:

The removal of systemic barriers and biases enabling all individuals to have the same opportunities

Prioritized Objective:

- EDI is embedded into daily practice at all levels of SPL

Possible Other Objectives:

- SPL is at the community table to connect with partners for guidance and direction
- Library space is welcoming and inclusive
- Inclusive environment - community members feel safe in the Library
- Artwork and displays continue evolving to reflect our community
- Budget for outreach and programs, staff/board training

Build Sustainable Partnerships to Expand Capacity

The Stratford community is bursting with creativity. By recognizing amazing opportunities to collaborate, we will create and build partnerships to work alongside the many experts in our community. Fostering these strong partnerships is important to the growth of the Library. This is our path to uplifting the incredible work of our community partners while exceeding the expectations of the Stratford community.

Prioritized Objective:

- Donation plan and procedures

Possible Other Objectives:

- Leverage PCIN strategic plan
- BlueCloud roll out
- Technology plan creation
- Grant to hire temporary funding director for donation plan

Intentionally Support Our Team

Our staff are the faces of SPL and largely contribute to making sure the community feels welcomed and at home at the Library. We will equip our staff with the partnerships that can support community members in times of crisis, intentionally build programs to best meet needs, and resources to nurture a sense of belonging. This will support and empower staff with feelings of comfort and readiness to continue being great stewards in our community.

Prioritized Objective:

- Envision a data-informed programming strategy to foster belonging

Possible Other Objectives:

- Collect data to inform cycle planning for inclusive programs
- Ensure staff are supported and educated
- Ongoing community connection - surveys, empathy mapping
- Expand partnerships with social support agencies

Strategic Plan Implementation Tracking

Strategic Direction	Align Space with Demand		
Objective	Fundraising feasibility study		
Key Results	Get budget approved	Develop RFQ/RFP	Consultant hired
Update 1			
Update 2			
Update 3			
Update 4			

Strategic Direction	Reach Out and Bring In			
Objective	Enhanced marketing strategy			
Key Results	Consensus on Marketing Priorities	Create Marketing Plan	Confirm and Approve Budget	Implementation Strategy
Update 1				
Update 2				
Update 3				
Update 4				

Strategic Direction	Lead Grounded Practice
Objective	EDI is embedded into daily practice at all levels of SPL

Key Results	Board policies and decisions to reflect EDI	Management empowers and provides training	Frontline staff trained and empowered to support EDI	Outreach connects with community
Update 1				
Update 2				
Update 3				
Update 4				

Strategic Direction	Build Sustainable Partnerships to Expand Capacity		
Objective	Donation plan and procedures		
Key Results	Fundraiser hired and in place	Plan requirements defined	Marketing strategy for donations
Update 1			
Update 2			
Update 3			
Update 4			

Strategic Direction	Intentionally Support Our Team			
Objective	Envision a data-informed programming strategy to foster belonging			
Key Results	Create and action annual plans	Create internal database to collate current and future data	Research data collection in the community	Leverage community partner data collection efforts
Update 1				
Update 2				

Update 3				
Update 4				