

# Stratford Public Library

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**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
2019 – 2022



## INTRODUCTION

**Libraries are changing rapidly to meet the evolving challenges of the information economy, and SPL is no different.** The Library is proud of the work that's been done over the course of the last Strategic Plan 2013-2018, including the refresh of the interior spaces, the creation of the MakerSpace, a new philosophy of services, and re-energized staff. We have been thrilled by the enthusiastic response; the community is using the services more than ever before. We continue to be amazed at the wonderful range of outcomes – everything from success in new jobs and businesses to the forging of new friendships. And the importance of public libraries in creating these community connections is something that's only just beginning to be explored.

In 2018, the Library Board has recognized the need for a new, adaptable, flexible plan that is responsive to social and economic changes. During this strategic planning process, the Board has been very deliberate about developing strategies based on an in-depth community consultation, review of the external factors, and a forecasting process to test its goals against possible challenges that may arise in our disrupted world.

The Library is confident that the redefined goals in this plan will be pivotal in ensuring that our community's needs continue to be met. In the spirit of the original Mechanics' Institute of 1846, we hope that the Library will continue to be a place where people go to make their lives better, and where hope drives connections between people, education, and prosperity.

**On behalf of the Stratford Public Library, welcome to the future!**

**Julia Merritt**

CEO | Stratford Public Library

## OUR MISSION

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

## OUR 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.**

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Ever. Wonder.







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**“This is very socially minded. Stratford has some big challenges that are easy not to think about, but it feels like there is a lot of alignment around the Library as having a role in solving that. That’s a differentiator from other communities.”**

PARTICIPANT IN STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION





# Our Strategic Goals

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In the next four years,  
Stratford Public Library will...

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"I love the ease with which I can have access to books that thrill, entice, inform and entertain. When I moved to Stratford three years ago the Library was my first stop."

COMMUNITY MEMBER IN ONLINE SURVEY

## STRATEGIC GOAL 1

# Enhance User Experience with Empowering and Inclusive Programs

The Library will experiment with bold new ideas and methods to attract new visitors and improve visitors' experiences within existing and potential new Library spaces. The Library will continue to provide programs and services which empower users to build the inspiring and inclusive community in which they want to live.

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## STRATEGIC GOAL 2

# Lead Global Change with the Local Community

The Library will continue to maintain a strong, positive connection to all members of the community and recognize each individual's influence on the Library. The Library will also proudly wear its role as a leader of change and convener of change makers. This will help to strengthen the Library's assertiveness in developing new connections with the community—to collaborate with local and global leaders and influence change within the community and beyond.

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## STRATEGIC GOAL 3

# Firm Our Foundation of Resources and Staff

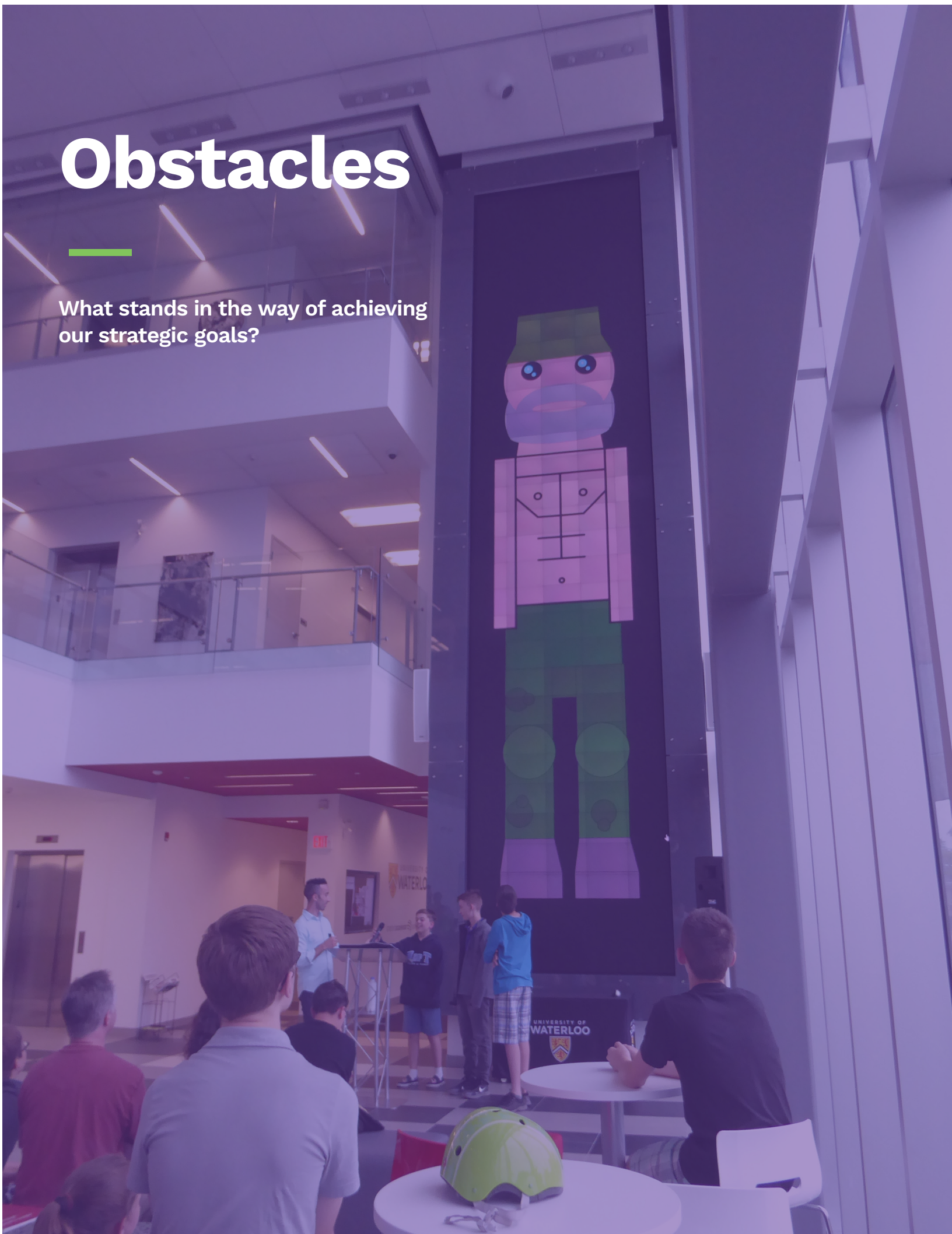
The Library will strengthen its physical resources and personnel in order to move forward and succeed with everyday projects. In particular, the Library will support and train a team of knowledgeable and highly skilled staff, which will position the Library as the community's first choice for learning, expertise, enjoyment of reading, and customer service. This will impact the Library's standing as a leader in the library and information services industry.

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# Obstacles


What stands in the way of achieving our strategic goals?






## OBSTACLE 1

# We Face Social and Political Resistance

- Breakdown of social conscience
  - Volatile political climate
  - Isolating effects of technology
  - Technology will not solve all problems
  - Dissolution of trust between people and experts
  - Provincial gutting of social services
  - Youth disinterest
  - Difficulty overcoming negative impressions of the Library and community
  - Sector-wide resistance to change
  - Difficulty cutting red-tape
- 


## OBSTACLE 2

# Who are we?

- Need for more vision at the board
  - Need for a clearer identity
  - Need for more succession planning
  - Need to increase staff buy-in
  - No consensus on fundraising and alignment
  - Need more confidence—be bold!
  - Linear approaches miss opportunities
  - Need for more room/time for visionary thinking
  - Being everything for everyone holds us back
  - Need greater willpower to make decisions
  - Risk of too much community consultation
- 


### OBSTACLE 3

## We Struggle to Straddle Past and Future

- Lack of cross-training
  - Stereotypes about libraries
  - Community attachment to Carnegie building
  - Unwelcoming staff
  - Lack of diversity in the library sector
  - Lack of depth of knowledge among staff
  - Complacency among the Library and the public
  - Staff turnover
- 

### OBSTACLE 4


## Misperceptions of the Library Decrease our Value

- We are not in the driver's seat with city council
  - Competition from other community needs
  - Not on community radar
  - Lack of time to change public perception
  - Staff overwhelmed by change
  - Territorialism of Library and community
  - Visible security makes the Library appear unsafe
  - Lack of attendance at programs
- 




## OBSTACLE 5

# We Lack A Concrete Plan

- Limited space in current facility
  - Building cannot sustain more technology
  - Lack of business planning
  - Not filling staff needs
  - Lack of parking
  - Stratification limits community fundraising opportunities
- 

## OBSTACLE 6

# We Have Communication Breakdowns

- Difficulty engaging the next generation
  - Focus on disenfranchised people comes at the expense of traditional patrons
  - Challenge to afford the speed of technology innovation
  - Inability to forecast trends
  - Competition with just-in-time expectations
  - Lack of strategic partnerships
  - Incompatible volunteer skills and availability
  - Festival is disinterested in partnership
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# Action Streams

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Action Streams provide a focus for our efforts and can be built out into work plans that include actionable steps, timelines, key players, tasks, and measurable outcomes.

**To achieve our strategic goals, we will:**

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“I’d love to take my kids on a trip around the world to each country and immerse them in culture. I’m on a budget, so I use the Library to do that.”

COMMUNITY MEMBER IN ONLINE SURVEY




## ACTION STREAM 1

# Advocate for the Library and Community

- Advocate more
  - Engage in political activism
  - Advocate for our civic role
  - Accentuate the positive
- 


## ACTION STREAM 2

# Strengthen the Library Internally

- Invest in people
  - Invest in staff development and training
  - Plan for succession
  - Become more diverse
  - Be and become community leaders
  - Embrace ambiguity
- 

## ACTION STREAM 3

# Connect Strategically and Be a Space to Connect the Community

- Create programs by youth
  - Embrace youth as assets
  - Consult the community and create program standards
  - Build strategic relationships
  - Help people connect
- 

## ACTION STREAM 4

# Develop and Clarify our Plans

- Forecast often (Board and Senior Leadership Team)
- Develop and activate business plan
- Absolutely create a facility plan
- Remember Carnegie
- Identify our mission
- Conduct evidence-based planning

## ACTION STREAM 5

# Promote the Value of the Library to the Community

- Promote a positive image
- Engage marketing expert
- Boost public support
- Optimize immediate opportunities





# Stratford Public Library's Action Streams

## Legend

- OBSTACLE 1
- OBSTACLE 2
- OBSTACLE 3
- OBSTACLE 4
- OBSTACLE 5
- OBSTACLE 6

ADVOCATE FOR THE LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY	STRENGTHEN THE LIBRARY INTERNALLY	CONNECT STRATEGICALLY AND BE A SPACE TO CONNECT THE COMMUNITY	DEVELOP AND CLARIFY OUR PLANS	PROMOTE THE VALUE OF THE LIBRARY TO THE COMMUNITY
● Advocate more	● Invest in people	● Embrace youth as assets	● Develop and activate business plan	● Promote a positive image
● Engage in political activism	● Invest in staff development and training	● Create programs by youth	● Identify our mission	● Boost public support
● Advocate for our civic role	● Plan for succession	● Consult the community and create program standards	● Forecast often (Board and Senior Leadership Team)	● Engage marketing expert
● Accentuate the positive	● Be and become community leaders	● Help people connect	● Remember Carnegie	● Optimize immediate opportunities
	● Become more diverse	● Build strategic relationships	● Absolutely create a facility plan	
	● Embrace ambiguity		● Conduct evidence-based planning	



Action streams were developed to solve particular obstacles. Each solution is colour-coded to correspond to an obstacle identified in the previous section.

# Wind Tunneling

**In a previous Foresight Workshop, the Library board and staff developed four possible scenarios of the future of Ontario. After completing the strategic plan, the group revisited the scenarios developed from the foresight work.**

In small groups representing each of the four scenarios, they worked to determine if the strategic goals would contribute to growth and resilience, turbulence and transition, or regression and collapse for the Library within each scenario.

The groups were given coloured post it notes and asked to “vote” on the goals based on the context of their scenarios. Green post its represented “growth and resilience for the Library”, yellow post its represented “turbulence and transition for the Library”, and red post its represented “regression and collapse for the Library”. This process, known as wind tunneling, is meant to test the developed strategic plan against the operational reality of each scenario in order to determine if the plan is robust enough to carry the Library to success regardless of what the future may look like.



# Four Scenarios

## The four scenarios are:

Power to the People  
The Good Life  
A Brave New Ontario  
Ford-Pocalypse

*Complete scenarios are listed in Appendix 3*

The following chart represents the results of the wind tunneling activity. The results with multiple indicators for success suggest areas for likely prioritization by the Library—because this action has been determined to support success regardless of the reality of the future.

## Which of these strategic goals:

- Contribute to growth and resilience for the library?
- Contribute to turbulence and transition for the library?
- Contribute to regression and collapse for the library?

	Scenarios:			
	Power to the People	The Good Life	A Brave New Ontario	Ford-Pocalypse
Skilled and supported professional staff	●	●	●	●
Firm our foundation	●	●	●	●
Enhance user experience	●	●	●	●
Provide empowering and inclusive programs	●	●	●	●
Become a leader of global change	●	●	●	●
Be rooted in the community	●	●	●	●



# Appendix 1



**A full capture of the ideas that  
built the action streams.**

# Advocate for the Library and Community

## Advocate more

- > Rotation of Library representatives at council meetings
- > Become well known at council meetings
- > Have the board take on an advocacy plan
- > Demonstrate clearly how we empower people and build communities

## Engage in political activism

- > Invite politicians to visit
- > Leverage the trust we have to build grassroots values again
- > Build stronger relationships
- > Actively address issues before they are further entrenched
- > Don't be afraid of activism

## Advocate for our civic role

- > Publicly embrace and advocate for the public space
- > Resist neoliberal attempts to privatize Libraries and run them like a business

## Accentuate the positive

- > Tell positive stories
- > Broadcast our happy stories
- > Continue to talk about success stories and anecdotes

# Strengthen the Library Internally

## Invest in people

- > Have a motivational retreat for staff and volunteers
- > Identify our skills and passions
- > Celebrate "Library" stories
- > Consult with staff who have seen the most change
- > Seek board members from further afield
- > Share the load across staff

## Invest in staff development and training

- > Increase staff training
- > Increase staff development days
- > Invest in staff development
- > Focus on staff (happy staff will lead to happy customers)
- > Revisit customer service standards
- > Use mindfulness techniques
- > Be the best at what we do
- > Decide what skills we want staff to have and then train them

## Plan for succession

- > Find external coaches for CEO and Senior Leadership Team
- > Increase staff
- > Find unrestricted funds
- > Develop Library staff as community leaders
- > Be ruthless in designing and realizing a new model of operation
- > Create a succession plan for all departments

## Become more diverse

- > Increase diversity in hiring specialties
- > Actively recruit more diversity
- > Institute a talent pipeline for attracting from more diverse sectors

## Being and becoming leaders

- > Transform SOLS to be the innovation hub for the Library
- > Train staff in technology
- > Share training desires and needs with the community
- > Hold staff group activities with the community
- > Start a volunteer exchange with other organizations

# Connect Strategically and Be a Space to Connect the Community

## Create programs by youth

- > Increase opportunities for youth with the Library (e.g. programs, volunteering)
- > Empower youth by involving them as part of the solution space
- > Start a youth board

## Embrace youth as assets

- > Involve youth in decision making
- > Speak to youth
- > Provide gaming and recording space for youth

## Consult community and create program standards

- > Create program standards for all programs
- > Try new intense ideas
- > Get involved in new ways (e.g. Heartburn day)
- > Host high profile author visits to schools with evening programs to involve adults

- > Hold “How To” workshops (e.g. bike repair)
- > Run Library-wide campaigns
- > Offer Library-wide and age diverse programs

#### **Build strategic relationships**

- > Develop stronger partnerships with school boards
- > Connect more strategically with partners
- > Promote ourselves to potential partners
- > Call for better Library supports
- > Don't be afraid of activism

#### **Help people connect**

- > Continue to build relationships with patrons
- > Offer intergenerational programming
- > Create social space for all
- > Use tech to connect, not isolate

## **Develop and Clarify our Plans**

#### **Forecast often (Board and Senior Leadership Team)**

- > Be prepared to use non-library resources
- > Design a new model of Library experience and engagement
- > Bring concrete ideas to the Stratford Festival for partnership

#### **Develop and activate business plan**

- > Create closer ties with business leaders
- > Solicit shamelessly
- > Prioritize creation of business plan
- > Seek funds from Carnegie Foundation
- > Hire a marketing person

#### **Absolutely create a facility plan**

- > Build a new building with Carnegie façade
- > Determine 20-50-year building needs with programming potential
- > Update space needs study
- > Do the analysis for different scenarios
- > Create plan for design/funding of building plan
- > Design our ideal building and operational model so we can advocate for it

#### **Remember Carnegie**

- > Fuse old and new whenever possible
- > Give the building back to the community and find what we need
- > Keep Carnegie Library as a flagship and acquire a second space
- > Use Carnegie principles to build a new library

- > Engage with those who love Carnegie by telling them how we can grow beyond it with their ideas
- > Involve the Carnegie façade into a new building

#### **Identify our mission**

- > Know what we can strive to be best at
- > Take a position and tell the world
- > Identify a vision and a plan
- > Have the board become more forward thinking
- > Simplify our goals
- > Set some concrete goals and reallocate resources
- > Create a simple vision and mission (repeatable)
- > Have a proper mission (exercise and rollout)
- > Be the driver of vision
- > Identify key performance indicators

#### **Conduct evidence-based planning**

- > Connect with global initiatives
- > Have strong positioning on social issues
- > Use outcome-based planning and evaluation
- > Conduct robust research on why libraries are important
- > Get expert advice from the tech sector

## **Promote the Value of the Library to the Community**

#### **Promote a positive image**

- > Communicate the positive
- > Put apples at the front desks
- > Offer Arts-based programming
- > Run a rebranding campaign
- > Use enthusiasm to build excitement
- > Hire Library security unaffiliated with the police

#### **Engage marketing expert**

- > Target marketing to get the word out and share what we truly do
- > Hire a full-time marketing person with an appropriate budget
- > Run bus ads

#### **Boost public support**

- > Get people excited about what more we can do with more space
- > Advocate relentlessly

#### **Optimize immediate opportunities**

- > Reassess collection space again
- > Embrace alternative or temporary space opportunities
- > Offer more offsite programs and services



# Appendix 2

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## Ideation of the Strategic Goals

The following are a complete list of ideas which make up the strategic goals. These ideas were generated by Library board and staff in response to the question, “over the next four years, Stratford Public Library will...”

## Goal 1

### Enhance User Experience with Empowering and Inclusive Programs

- > Abolish fines
- > Reach teens and 20-somethings
- > Make sure 80% of community has a library card
- > Create a café space
- > Use front garden in positive way
- > Embed Library staff in schools
- > Create stroller and bike parking
- > Expand MakerSpace
- > Offer offsite after-hours programs
- > Provide access to a social worker in-house
- > Showcase local talent
- > Discourage ageism
- > Open a Pop-up library
- > Offer English conversation circles
- > Host an Indigenous Elder in Residence
- > Accept “joyful” noise
- > Offer programs off-site for older adults

## Goal 2

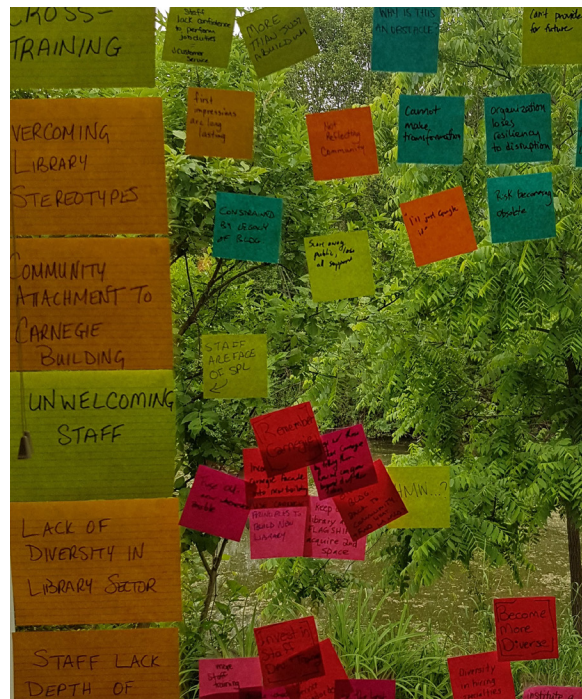
### Lead Global Change from the Local Community

- > Motivate leaders for global impact
- > Build a library at the HUB
- > Have the Mayor hold office hours in the Library
- > Offer settlement services
- > Gain sponsorship from corporations
- > Curate civic pride
- > Offer more community input in decision-making
- > Be a driver for social change
- > Become an incubator of innovation
- > Support our most vulnerable
- > Develop a new or evolved mandate for life-long learning
- > Make fundraising easier
- > Provide a deep collection that anyone can find
- > Develop a launchpad for creativity
- > Buy Family and Company
- > Gain Stratford Festival support for programming
- > Gain city council commitment for more space

## Goal 3

### Firm Our Foundation of Resources and Staff

- > Offer the best customer service in Stratford
- > Increase diversity of staff and board
- > Become the leading Ontario library in our class
- > Master emerging technologies
- > Become collaboration partner of choice
- > Achieve certified environmental sustainability
- > Increase mental health training
- > Become a single-source community information platform
- > Continue to offer inter-library cooperation (PCIN)
- > Become the people's first choice for reading and expertise
- > Hire full time marketing role
- > Gain total political support from council
- > Achieve financial stability
- > Renovate or acquire new facility
- > Make sure everyone knows what SPL offers
- > Provide best security for staff
- > Complete Media Saturation
- > Hire more staff
- > Diversify revenue
- > Solve space issues



# Appendix 3



## Stratford Public Library's Strategic Foresight Scenarios



## Power to the People

### Power to the People

Imagine all public services are delivered by artificial intelligence (AI). That's the reality of 2030, as AI pushes humanity to new heights while replacing many humans in the workforce. Thousands of citizens become marginalized as a result of losing their jobs, while other groups prosper by leveraging their knowledge and access to AI in meaningful ways. There is a clear economic divide between these groups. For those who are fortunate enough, the functions of AI deliver every necessary aspect of what one might need (for example, personal and public transportation, customer service, etc...).

Social systems are now streamlined, efficient and effective. However, community needs are at risk, as things such as mentoring, social skills, and face-to-face communication dwindle. As people struggle to connect with each other in meaningful ways, sense of belonging is also reduced. The voices at the bottom of this system fight to be heard, and inevitably, those in positions of little power fall through the cracks. There is growing resentment of AI and concern over the ethical implications of machines making decisions for people. While some people fight to prioritize human contact and conversation, others who benefit from technological advancements will stomp out those who challenge them.

Libraries will continue to be community builders, serving a critical role as a place to connect those who are otherwise isolated. They will uphold the dignity of being human, work to connect people, and fill social and community voids. Libraries will also be at the centre of AI knowledge and other forms of new media literacy using their position as community connectors to spread knowledge and information.

## Power to the People

### What is this “world” like?

- Non-humans are delivering public services
- High-speed, self-driving transportation allows for more time for reading
- There is an increase in green space and a decrease in parking lots
- Greater divide between those who can harness AI and those who have had their work replaced by AI
- Increased threat to community and sense of belonging

### What has changed?

- There is an increase in time for and value of leisure activities, creative endeavours, and personal hobbies
- Services operate efficiently and effectively
- There is an increase in collaboration resulting in more services to the community
- AI is assisting the “common person
- The Library embraces all new media and technology
- Increased need for a ‘Human Library’

### What is the same?

- People at the bottom of the economic system have little political power
- Entry level jobs are decreasing
- There is ongoing ethical debate over how AI makes decisions, especially regarding human life
- The Library is a community builder, people connector, and source of knowledge

### Strategic Implications of this Scenario

- Learning and staying current in AI research and products
- Position the Library as a leader in AI services and knowledge
- Market and promote the Library as a community builder

## The Good Life

### The Good Life

The year 2030 sees the almost-complete replacement of mundane jobs through automation, as AI steps up to advance humanity. Technology is democratized, and everyone has access to information that is beneficial to their learning, growth, and well-being. Technology is completely intertwined with home and daily-life. There has been a transition to a more human-centred way of working and interacting with the world, assisted by AI.

Less emphasis on the need to work to increase wealth has created a divide between those who choose and choose not to work. Those who work seek meaningful employment. As more invest in care taking roles, Populism has faded and becomes more marginal, while socialism is a more predominant political theme. Environmental concerns are at the forefront of society's priorities. What is important to people is that sustainability, carbon neutrality and human-centred care for others takes precedence in all aspects of life. The need for social connection is recognized and met through services enhanced by emotionally intelligent AI and robots.

The Library is a collaborative player with community leadership, community-based businesses, partners, and their customers. The Library is considered a centre for learning, navigating and empowering, and most importantly, a culturally collaborative meeting place that preserves and shares history and memories of the past.



## The Good Life

### What is this “world” like?

- Poverty in Ontario is greatly reduced
- Caring for others is highly valued
- Increased automation and AI has reduced mundane jobs
- There is a cultural focus on mental, emotional well-being
- There is a divide between those who choose to work and those who choose to not to work
- There is an increase in socialist ideals
- The environment and sustainability is a priority for all

### What has changed?

- Human-centred care is the cultural norm for all services
- The line between humans and technology is very blurry
- Robots and AI are in every industry, and aiding humans rather than replacing them
- Robots and AI are programmed with emotions and feelings
- The world is carbon neutral

### What is the same?

- A need for social connection due to isolation
- People turn to technology for mental and emotional health and well-being
- The Library is the cultural meeting place and repository of knowledge

### Strategic Implications of this Scenario

- Embrace the role as the ‘People’s University’
- Invest in learning technologies
- Position programming as the driver for building relationships and collaboration within the community
- Invest in staff training and development

## A Brave New Ontario

### A Brave New Ontario

Rapid innovation in AI has created a deeply stratified division of wealth, greatly enhancing the capabilities of the humans who can afford it. In an effort to prevent increasing economic downturns, a basic income supplement program is put into place. This creates a shift away from funding for public, social, and community services. Those who can compete in big business and software development prosper, while others see their roles increasingly replaced by AI. A restricted flow of information depending on demographics and popular ideologies is recycled through algorithms, feeding into political decision-making and controlling people through media.

Many citizens feel unfulfilled and uncertain due to a lack of rewarding work. There is an increasing need to self brand and capitalize on screen presence while genuine, spontaneous interaction falls off significantly. While AI can now perfect human flaws, citizens feel unable to self-actualize in meaningful ways. This leads to large-scale decreases in mental and physical wellbeing—including a loss of purpose, a declining sense of community, and further polarization of ideologies.

In this future, the Library works alongside all levels of government to fill increasing gaps created by disappearing social services. Knowledge workers and IT companies work closely with the Library as partners to offer technology and innovation incubation. The Library advertises its space and services as a respite to those feeling disenfranchised by this way of life. Community is built around the Library as a social hub, offering connection to social services and democratic and civic programs as well as acting as community promoters and advocates.

## A Brave New Ontario

### What is this “world” like?

- A basic income supplement has been implemented
- People feel unfulfilled due to a lack of human connection
- People are polarized on most social and political ideologies
- Information is restricted and controlled by governing systems
- Higher technology use increases self-absorption and vanity

### What has changed?

- Universal basic income helps increase the knowledge economy
- There is a smaller budget for social and community services
- Organizations have a flattened structure
- The Library is the central tech incubator and creative space
- Everyone has intelligent artificial assistants

### What is the same?

- Social isolation is leading to xenophobia and violence
- Society is obsessed with ‘selfie culture’ and self branding
- Big business and technology companies are the big winners in the economy
- Social media’s influence on politics and public discourse
- Dominant ideologies are spread through social media through AI technologies

### Strategic Implications of this Scenario

- Improve staff training related to technology in order to widen skills and knowledge across the entire team
- Increase political advocacy in the community for stronger awareness of the Library
- Strengthen partnerships
- Find key performance indicators and highlight the Library’s return on investment

## Fordpocalypse

### Fordpocalypse

In this world of revived 1950's nostalgia, Doug Ford has won not only the 2018 provincial election but has been re-elected four times. His strong alignment with Trump and Putin leads Ontario to a highly corporate, white-male dominated political regime. Funding for social programs, education, and community development are abandoned while taxes are extensively cut. The rich and powerful—and their holograms—use their ever-expanding privilege to extend their luxurious lifestyles. They have cutting edge genetic technology at their disposal, allowing them to extend their life well beyond the common population. Technology available has no neutrality and is constantly under watch. News reporting is completely obsolete as single-source (Google), highly controlled propaganda becomes the main source of reporting

Those belonging to marginalized groups such as women, equity seeking groups, and immigrants, face hardship, poor quality of life, and shortened lifespans. People who are disadvantaged in this way have little-to-no access to technology—increasing social amongst these groups. The general public seeks comfort and a sense of freedom by flying under the radar, remaining compliant, and focusing on survival. The public has no trust in decision-makers, who have resorted to encouraging apathy and compliance by making drugs and alcohol highly accessible.

Libraries safeguard their true role in this society by maintaining a veil of necessary compliance. Behind the scenes they stockpile knowledge and cultural heritage. They fight to protect democratic and historical processes by using the technology and media of the past. In this way, libraries act as a rebel resistance—they are the unsung heroes of a world dominated by artificial intelligence and wealth.



## Fordpocalypse

### What is this “world” like?

- Propaganda for social conservatism and populist ideologies is inescapable
- The social safety net has been dismantled
- There is a large divide between a two-class system with a widening gap between the rich and the poor
- There is a return to the nuclear family
- Compliance helps those working against systems of oppression
- Drugs and alcohol are legally and easily accessible
- Equity seeking groups fight a steep uphill battle for recognition

### What has changed?


- Technology prolongs life indefinitely for those who can afford it
- Fake news is the only news and costs money
- There is no net neutrality
- The education system suffers due to reduced funding
- Librarians stockpile technology and media to preserve old ways of living

### What is the same?

- Technology continues to advance and improve the lives of those who can afford it
- Big business employs widespread technological surveillance
- Libraries are the community hub, providing social services and meaningful social connections

### Strategic Implications of this Scenario

- Keep mobile and build trust with the community
- Invest in remaining up-to-date with new technologies
- Stay informed on political issues and advocate for the Library and other social services



**This Strategic Plan has been developed collaboratively  
with Stratford Public Library and Overlap Associates**

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**Better is  
absolutely  
possible.**

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