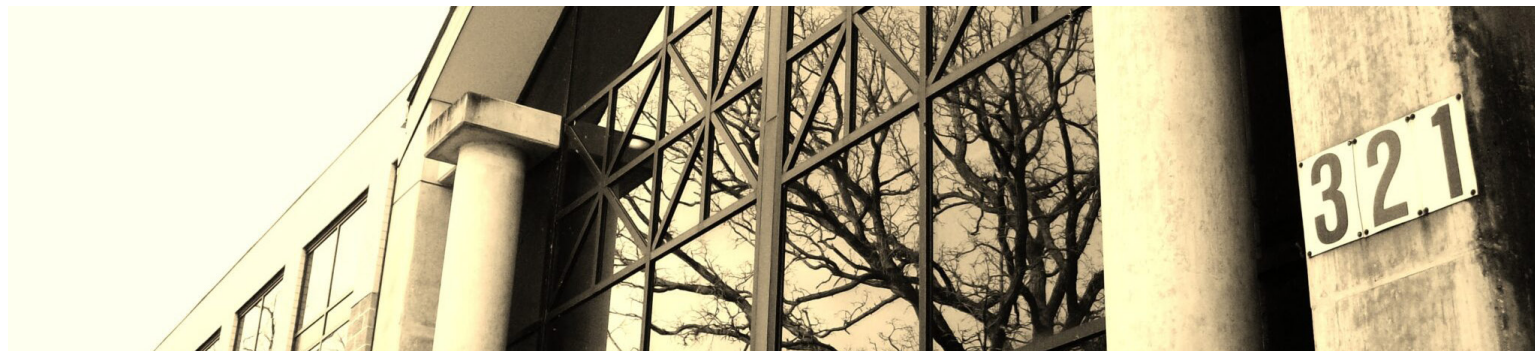


Strategic Plan

2024 -
2028





About Waukesha Public Library

Waukesha Public Library is a 71,566-square-foot facility located in picturesque Cutler Park in downtown Waukesha, Wisconsin. Established in 1896, the Library was the 16th Andrew Carnegie-funded institution in Wisconsin, opening in 1904; five additions and renovations followed, with the most recent three in 2005, 2010, and 2021.

Our Vision

The heart of a thriving city, the Library connects and inspires the community to transform lives.

Our Mission

Waukesha Public Library champions the power of reading and learning to enrich, empower, and engage all in our community.

Service Values

People	We believe the Library's purpose is to be used and enjoyed by the people of the Waukesha area.
Community	We strengthen the community by collaborating with others, engaging in dialogue, and celebrating our history.
Creative Discovery	We believe in fostering new ideas, both for the Library and for a thriving city.
Inclusivity	We strive to equitably serve everyone in our diverse community.
Civility and Respect	We believe in open and polite dialogue, in intellectual freedom, and privacy for all.
Excellence	We hire the best staff and work to continually improve in order to meet the changing needs of our community.
Accountability	We meet our obligations and are responsible stewards of the community's investment.
Passion	We know that the Library transforms people's lives for the better.



The Strategic Planning Process

Five years ago, Waukesha Public Library completed a robust strategic planning process that resulted in a final plan with broad goals, each with objectives suited for the Waukesha community and the Library. In fact, the goals were so evergreen that the Library wanted to see if they were still, with some modifications, the right path for Library staff, stakeholders, and the broader community. Therefore, Waukesha Public Library completed a process that evaluated its most recent plan, gathered updated information about the Library and community, and resulted in a refreshed plan for the next five years.

The planning process, led by a planning team made up of Library staff, a Library board member, and a Library Friend, included:

- Demographic data from the U.S. Census and the American Community Survey
- A survey completed by over 40 staff members evaluating the most recent plan
- A staff Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results engagement session
- A community survey that received over 1,000 responses
- A community gathering. This was the first time Waukesha Public Library held this informal drop-in event that welcomed community members and asked them to answer three questions to help inform the Library's strategic plan. Forty-five adults and fifteen children took part in the gathering.
- A teen survey completed by over 230 Waukesha teens
- Careful analysis of Library annual report data

*Through events and surveys, the Library heard and learned from nearly **1,300 community members**. The voices and needs of Waukesha are at the heart of the Library's refreshed goals for the next five years.*

The Past Five Years

The Library's 2019-2023 strategic plan had five goals that acted as guides for the work of our staff, board, and Friends. The Library's work towards these goals included the following successes:

- A major Library renovation that increased the usability of our space. The renovation included a modern, flexible community room space to support programming and community gatherings, as well as a makerspace to support innovation and creativity in Waukesha.
- A stronger-than-ever Friends group that has supported the Library by graciously committing to donating \$125,000 to the major renovation. Friends have also generously supported the Library through the years by purchasing public art panels, hosting book discussions for teens and adults, providing incentives for both the children's and teen Summer Reading Clubs, establishing the Library Book Group Kit collection, providing furniture, and acting as a financial and volunteer support for Waukesha Reads community-wide reading program.
- A reorganized and re-energized staff structure to provide excellent service and improve public satisfaction.
- A focus on improved internal communication to ensure that staff can provide consistent, high-quality service to our community.
- A strong post-pandemic recovery. Monthly statistics show programming attendance, circulation, and library card sign-ups in 2023 that outpace 2022.
- The development of a marketing team for the Library to increase awareness around all it does and provides.



Through the evaluative portion of the 2023 planning process, the staff and board determined that the five goals are still the right goals for the Library and the Waukesha community. And, through the future-facing portion of the planning process, the goal language and the corresponding objectives were updated to meet the current needs of the Library and those it serves.

The Next Five Years

Goal I

A Pillar of Community Enrichment and Collaboration

Be a vibrant hub that fosters literacy, learning, and connections and supports a thriving civic life for our entire community.

Objective 1.1

Align services, staff skills, and resources with the needs of the community.

Objective 1.2

Increase inclusivity and access to services and resources by removing unnecessary barriers and facilitating positive interactions.

Objective 1.3

Build our presence outside the Library and develop partnerships that strengthen our capacity to engage all in our community.



The Next Five Years

Goal II

A Community-Supported Resource

Activate and engage the community to support the Library's mission and evolving community needs.

Objective 2.1

Activate Library champions throughout our community, including the Friends of WPL, Library volunteers, and community advocates, to support programming, innovative services, and our mission.

Objective 2.2

Establish necessary structures to support the fiscal sustainability of Library activities.



The Next Five Years

Goal III

A World-Class Library

Continuously assess and improve the appeal, usability, and overall condition of the building, inside and out, to be as welcoming and accessible as possible.

Objective 3.1

Improve the appeal, accessibility, and safety of the Library's spaces, resulting in increased visits and the ability for customers to find what they need when they need it.

Objective 3.2

Improve existing spaces by identifying key community and staff needs and implementing necessary changes and updates.



The Next Five Years

Goal IV

A Culture of Excellence

Support our staff with tools, innovations, professional development, and leadership that creates an atmosphere where staff respond to and respect all patrons and their evolving needs.

Objective 4.1

Continuously enhance the professional development framework and system, fostering a healthy culture that promotes individual growth.

Objective 4.2

Continuously seek out and implement tools and innovations to support staff and public needs.



Goal V

An Increased Awareness of All We Do and Offer

Identify and implement strategies to best promote and communicate the Library's vision and mission, foster a strong connection between the Library and our community, and make staff more confident in sharing our Library story.

Objective 5.1

Develop and support a strategic vision for marketing and promoting the Library.

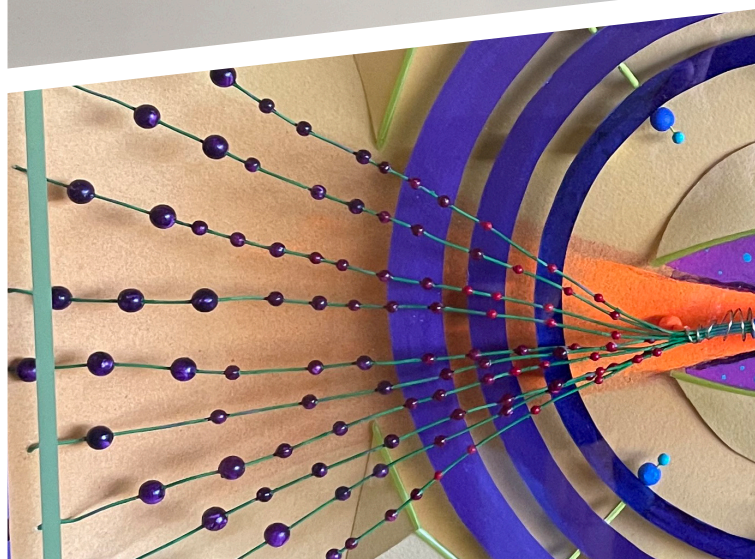
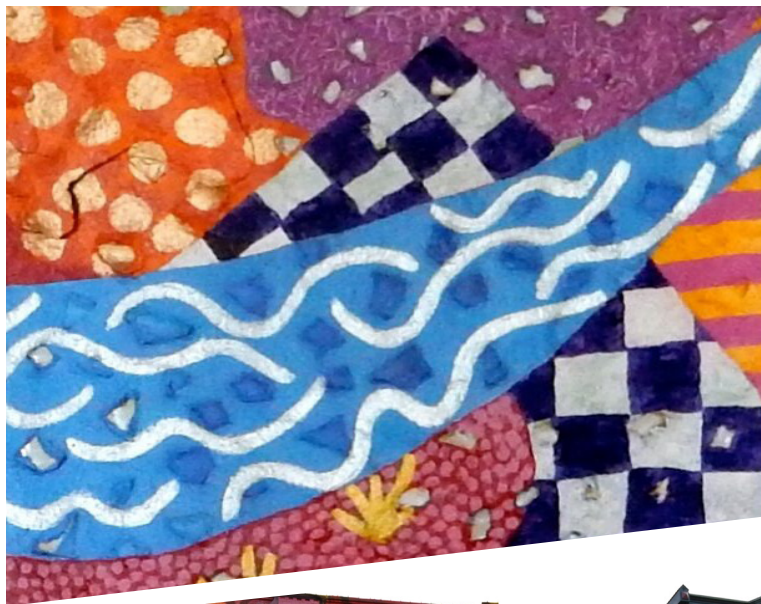
Objective 5.2

Increase staff awareness and participation in marketing and communication efforts.

Objective 5.3

Grow community participation in library communication and promotion efforts.





Implementation and Communication

The Waukesha Public Library Director and staff will work with the Library Board of Trustees to prioritize, identify service goals, and coordinate activities from this plan. The Library will consider available resources, including funding and staff time; changing conditions locally, regionally, and statewide; and opportunities that arise during the implementation of the plan. During the planning process, the Library identified specific activities to start in Year 1 of the five-year plan. Staff will focus on projects that meet the mission of the Library, are foundational to future projects and goals, and will best meet the articulated needs of the community and staff.

The ongoing planning process for the Library will include project management, assessment, communication, and re-prioritization activities to ensure the goals of the plan are realized with the flexibility to adapt as needed. The Library will follow an annual process and schedule to implement and assess the strategic plan.

The Library will work to communicate openly and regularly with staff, the board, and our community on the progress made on the goals of this plan.



Acknowledgments

Waukesha Public Library believes in putting the customer first and that how we treat people is more important than anything else. The customer-first approach was at the heart of this planning process, and the Library worked to engage the community throughout. The Library and this plan are better because of the community they both serve. The Library would like to extend its sincere appreciation to community members who completed a survey, attended the community gathering, or offered feedback over the past years.

The Library would also like to thank its dedicated staff. Even before the strategic planning process began, staff were instrumental in developing the process, determining what questions needed to be answered and how the Library could best engage its various stakeholders. The staff was instrumental in promoting surveys, taking part in the community gathering, and developing the plan.



The Library would like to acknowledge our supportive and thoughtful Board:

President	Paul Kasprowicz
Vice-President	Betsy Forrest
Secretary, Waukesha County Designee	Martha Ryan
Common Council Representative	Alicia Halvensleben
Waukesha County Designee	Melissa Baxter
Superintendent's Designee	Dr. James Sebert
Trustee	Sandra Ammerman
Trustee	Cynthia Deatrick
Trustee	Kevin Guilfooy
Trustee	Erik Helgestad
Trustee	Bonnie Byrd

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Library Director	Bruce Gay
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Community Engagement Manager	Kerry Pinkner
Public Services Manager	Justin Stevenson
Materials Collection Librarian	Alyssa Pisarski
Library Board Vice President	Betsy Forrest
President of the Friends of Waukesha Public Library	Terry Carpenter

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