



STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2027

**TO INSPIRE OUR COMMUNITY
TO LEARN, CONNECT AND THRIVE**

Adopted by the Waterbury Public Library Commission on 1/9/2023

Library Commissioners
Shannon DeSantis Gile, Chair
Deanna King
Susan Mazza
Maroni Minter
Margaret Moreland

waterburypubliclibrary.com | 802-244-7036
28 North Main Street, Waterbury, VT 05676

Acknowledgements

The Planning Committee would like to thank all those who took part in the process of developing this strategic plan. This includes, but is in no way limited to, the many community members who shared their thoughts with us; Ann Turkle, who hosted our public planning meeting; Becky White for her remarkable conversation with our teen and pre-teen group; Linda Siegel for providing so much context and insight into past planning processes; Mary Kasamatsu for all of her historical background on the Library and previous planning processes; the Friends of the Library for hosting us at their pop-up book sale at the Farmers Market; the Waterbury Rotary Club for being one of the first groups to receive and complete our survey; Representative Theresa Wood and Select Board members Michael Bard and Alyssa Johnson for attending our public meeting and sharing their insights.

Library staff members Michelle Willey, Cynthia Ryle, Judi Byron, Kyle Creason, Roeki DeMaria and Hayley Martin were indispensable. Whether sharing their thoughts at a meeting, providing feedback one-on-one, or assisting with our website and publicity, their support made this important work possible.

Our planning process was informed by the Public Library Association publication, *Strategic Planning for Public Libraries* by Joy L. Fuller, the shared knowledge of public librarians throughout Vermont, and the resources gathered by the Vermont Department of Libraries and the Massachusetts Library System.

Introduction

In the spring of 2022, a dedicated committee took up the Library Commissioners' charge to identify what the Waterbury community wants and needs from its public library. The last plan was done over a decade ago, in a very different time for a very different library. Data was gathered over several months through focus groups, one-on-one interviews and community surveys. Based on the results, three overarching goals were identified along with a multitude of action items for the coming years.

Process and Timeline

Waterbury Public Library's most recent long-range plan was adopted in 2009 with the intent of guiding the Library through 2013. Of course, nobody could predict that 2011's Tropical Storm Irene would have such a major impact on the town and Library. This led to the Library's closure, temporary relocation, and eventual construction of our current Library, which opened in 2016. Finally settled into the fantastic new building, long-time director Mary Kasamatsu retired in 2018 - and a new director, Almy Landauer, was hired. She faced the Library's next remarkable challenge: the 2020

COVID-19 pandemic. This crisis resulted in closures and partial openings and a completely new way of providing books and services to the public. Landauer left the Library in 2021 and Rachel Muse took on the directorship that summer. One of the first items raised by the Commissioners when Muse stepped into the role was the need for a long-range plan.

We chose to keep the Planning Committee small. A smaller group could meet as a whole more frequently than a larger one, allowing us to make progress relatively quickly. As the planning process would involve gathering data from a wide range of patrons, staff, and community members, we knew that interested parties would have plenty of opportunity to make their voices heard. The Committee consisted of Library Director Rachel Muse, Library Commissioners Deanna King and Margaret Moreland and President of the Friends of the Waterbury Public Library Maureen White.

The Committee first met in April of 2022. Initial meetings were spent discussing and laying out the planning process, reviewing past plans and other libraries' plans, and beginning to draft the survey document. The group met approximately every two weeks through the spring, summer and fall.

Distribution of the survey began in mid-August and included paper copies, available in the Library and distributed at a Farmers Market and Rotary Club meeting, and a Google Form on the Library's website. The survey was promoted with links posted to Library social media channels, physical posters with a QR code linking to the survey placed all over town, and inclusion in the Library newsletter and the *Waterbury Roundabout*, and even a PSA about the survey on WDEV. However, the single greatest spike in survey response came after *Front Porch Forum* posts were made for Waterbury and Duxbury. A canvass of non-users was also conducted at Waterbury's Farmers Market.

Three focus group meetings took place in September: one public meeting that was advertised widely, a staff meeting hosted by Maureen White, and a gathering of pre-teens and teens at a regularly scheduled art club attended by Becky White. In conjunction with these larger meetings, Committee members met one-on-one with library patrons with different perspectives to discuss their experience of and vision for the library.

The Committee analyzed the data received and, in October 2022, used it to develop an outline for the plan. They shared the plan outline with the Library Commissioners at a special meeting in November. Upon approval of the Commissioners, this full plan and a one-page version were developed.

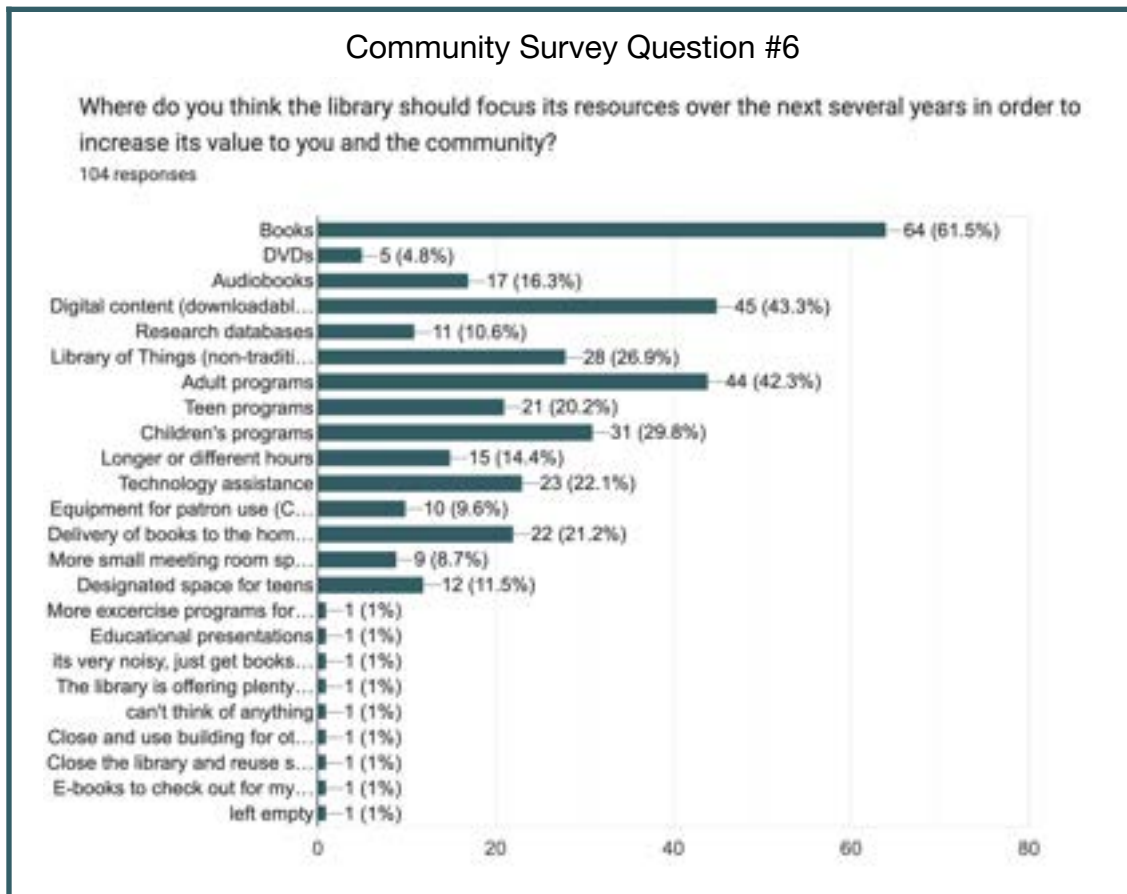
Community Feedback

Survey responses and input from focus groups and interviews proved interesting. While the vast majority of our respondents were regular library users, we did see a few responses from people who did not use the library, or did not use the library consistently.

The primary reasons people cited for not using the library were that they purchase all their books/movies/etc (9 survey responses); that the library hours don't work with their schedules (6 responses); and that the library does not have the materials that they need (3 responses).

The majority of respondents learn about library programming and services from *Front Porch Forum*. A large number also cited the libraries own website and newsletter as their source of information.

Books are still the greatest interest of survey respondents - 64 people selected books as the area the library should focus on in the coming years. Digital content (ebooks and eaudio books) followed with 45 respondents. Adult programs was the next highest area of interest, with 44 responses.



For full survey results, see Appendix 3. For notes from meetings and interviews, see Appendix 4.

Goals and Objectives

Each of the following goals represents a component of the community's vision for the future of the Waterbury Public Library. The objectives for each goal will guide the vision and will be regularly revisited and reviewed in the coming years to ensure we are on the right track.

Awareness and Outreach

To enhance the Library's reputation as a vibrant, valuable and meaningful community resource, engaging a diverse population of users and partners, both inside and outside the building.

- Raise awareness of library services, particularly beyond those commonly used and popular library programs.
 - Survey other libraries' marketing ideas and pilot new methods where possible.
 - Create a marketing plan.
 - Seek marketing interns and/or skilled volunteers to assist with this work and update our marketing materials.
- Identify and engage with partner organizations in the community, particularly those working with seniors, people with disabilities and other potentially marginalized groups.
 - Leverage existing relationships through the Library Commission, Friends of the Library, and other community members already working with the Library.
 - Review policies for equity and inclusion, particularly around unhoused persons and other groups that may face barriers to Library use, and seek outside input on those policies.
- Grow our presence at community events and through partners.
 - Create an organized book delivery program to provide library materials to those who cannot visit the library in person.
 - Identify high-profile community events and schedule related library programs and outreach activities well in advance of those events.
 - Track community events on a calendar.
- Increase Library membership.
 - Promote library cards in new ways, highlighting the benefits of membership - utilizing new marketing methods and marketing assistance.
 - Take advantage of Library Card Sign-Up Month (September) to roll out membership promotion.
 - Expand relationships with neighboring communities.
 - Develop more of a presence in Waterbury Center (ideas include StoryWalk and a "give a book/leave a book" shelf).
 - Enhance membership marketing in Duxbury and Bolton.

- Reach out to regional libraries and seek sharing opportunities around programming.
 - Look into Homecard and other reciprocal borrowing opportunities.
- Expand staff hours dedicated to outreach and ensure that compensation is appropriate for the work, especially for the Patron Services Librarian and Youth Librarian.

People and Place

To expand the Library's role as a welcoming, useful, accessible and safe space, meeting the needs of all community members, partners and staff.

- Examine current library hours to determine if our hours are appropriate and meet patron needs.
- Seek solutions to allow for quiet reading, study and work space.
 - Consult with experts on layout and noise.
 - Better clarify expectations in different areas of the Library.
- Continue to make strong use of outdoor space and seek solutions to making it more usable for programming.
 - See what other libraries have done to better utilize outdoor space and work with the Town and the Recreation Department.
 - If possible, bring electricity to the Word Garden/Book Garden area to create more programming options.
 - Create a better flow between the Rec Field Pavilion and the Library space and make more use of the Pavilion.
 - Partner with Friends of the Waterbury Public Library to fundraise for any major projects.
- Ensure that staff are supported in their needs and job satisfaction, creating a work environment where people want to stay long-term.
 - Budget for updating and improving staff technology and workspace where possible.
 - Cross-train staff to ensure that basic patron services are provided at a high level regardless of who is on duty.
 - Ensure that all staff members are compensated in accordance with their level of skill, experience and knowledge.

Collection and Programs

To ensure that the Library provides a diverse, relevant, and thoughtful range of books, digital resources and programming aimed at fostering life-long learning and growth.

- Audit collection for diversity and comprehensiveness to identify gaps and to build a collection that best meets the needs of our evolving community.

- Solicit input from the public and other local organizations on collection areas to highlight.
- Review and update materials selection and other relevant policies and procedures to reflect values around diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Review program attendance statistics and survey attendees to determine program satisfaction, provide desired programming, and identify gaps in the following areas:
 - Topics/subjects of programming.
 - Delivery mechanisms for programming, expanding hybrid methods whenever possible.
 - Timing/scheduling of programs.
- Ensure that staff is knowledgeable, forward-looking, and inclusive in collection development and program planning.
 - Provide funding and time for professional development directed at developing the best collection development and programming services possible.
 - Review and update position descriptions and library procedures to reflect values around diversity, equity and inclusion.

Short-Term Goals - 2023 Action Items

It is clear from analyzing the responses to the planning survey and meetings that more staff time and energy needs to be immediately focused on raising awareness and outreach on all that the Library provides to the community. In light of that, as the Library Director prepares the budget and staff schedule for 2023, we anticipate:

- Adding 2.5 hours a week to the Youth Librarian position.
- Rearranging the schedule so the Patron Services/Outreach Librarian position has more off-desk hours, totalling approximately 15 hours a month.

To support their success in this work, both of these staff members will be receiving new or refurbished laptops by the end of 2022. The Technology Librarian will also be receiving a new laptop.

The Library Director is encouraging staff to take advantage of professional development opportunities, particularly around outreach and promotion and equity and inclusion issues, and will ensure that staff have the time and resources available to allow their success in this area. All staff will have the opportunity to attend this year's Vermont Library Association Conference in South Burlington.

The Patrons Services/Outreach Librarian will be funded to join the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services in order to have access to training and expertise. In the event that professional

development and training expenses exceed the Library's budget in those areas, the Friends of the Waterbury Public Library are willing and able to cover some of those expenses.

Other specific items the Library Director plans to focus on in 2023 include:

- Finding interns and/or volunteers with the skills and interest to assist with promoting the Library. This work may include:
 - Surveying promotion at other libraries to find fresh ideas;
 - Developing promotional material around Library services beyond our usual program promotion and, if possible;
 - Developing a marketing plan for the Library going forward.
- Work with the Patron Services/Outreach Librarian to gauge community interest and formalize and promote a book delivery program to patrons who cannot visit the Library in person. If this program is well-received, volunteer support will be recruited to assist with this work.
- Complete an Hours Assessment to better understand when the Library has the highest volume of use and begin planning longer-term for schedule changes.
- Working with the Adult Programming Librarian to develop simple survey tools and begin surveying program attendees in order to get a better sense of what types of programs people would be interested in and how and when they would like to be able to attend programs.
- Seek training or guidance in applying a diversity, equity and inclusion lens to policy and procedure. Begin reviewing existing Library policy through that lens, particularly looking to break down barriers to Library services to the most vulnerable in our community.

In summary, 2023 will be a year of becoming more organized and focused around promotion of existing services; to make a greater effort to provide staff with the tools they need for success in their roles at the Library; to determine if the Library hours best meet the needs of our patrons; and to begin to make a greater effort to ensure that the Library is equitable and inclusive in policy, programming and practice.

Long-Term Goals and Plan Review and Revision

The Planning Committee is keenly aware that a plan is just that - a plan, with potential to evolve with changes to the Library Commission, Library leadership and staff, Town priorities, and the impact of outside events beyond the control of the Library. We are more acutely aware of this possibility in late 2022, looking back on a few years of turbulence that impacted the Library in ways that we never would have envisioned a decade ago. Thus, we see this plan as a working document. Rather than creating a strict timeline of when the goals above will be realized, the Director will focus on the short-term goals laid out above in 2023. As the year draws to a close, and in alignment with the Commissioner's evaluation of the Director's work, she will review the plan, report to the Commission on progress with the 2023 goals and set next steps for going forward.

Conclusions

The goals and objectives outlined above will serve as guideposts for the coming years. Additional feedback from our community is always welcome. Library Director Muse can be contacted via email at rachel@waterburypubliclibrary.org or by calling the library at 802-244-7036.

Appendix 1: Community Demographics

Appendix 2: Community Survey

Appendix 3: Survey Results

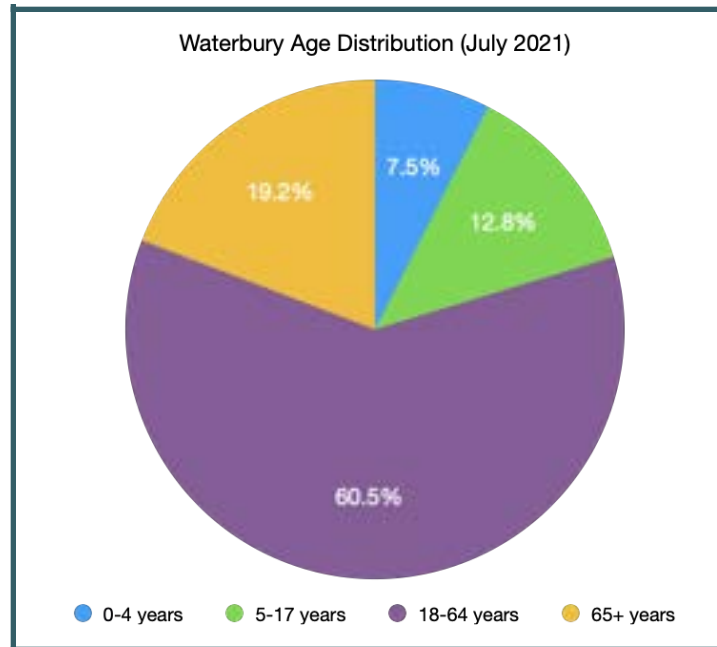
Appendix 4: Meeting and Interview Notes

Appendix 5: Strategic Plan Summary

Appendix 1: Community Demographics

Waterbury, Vermont is a diverse, energetic community known for being Central Vermont's recreational crossroads. A bedrock principle of the Library is to support all segments of the population as a center for enjoyment, learning, social connections, and aspirations.

According to the latest census data Waterbury's estimated population on July 1st 2021, was 5,320 people. This was only slightly higher than the previous year, but twice as high as the increase for the entire state. The median age was 33.3 years. Waterbury's age distribution can be seen in the chart below.



Like the rest of Vermont, the population was overwhelmingly white, but 3% consisted of racial and ethnic minorities, over 2.5% were foreign born, and over 2.4% of those over age 5 spoke a language other than English at home.

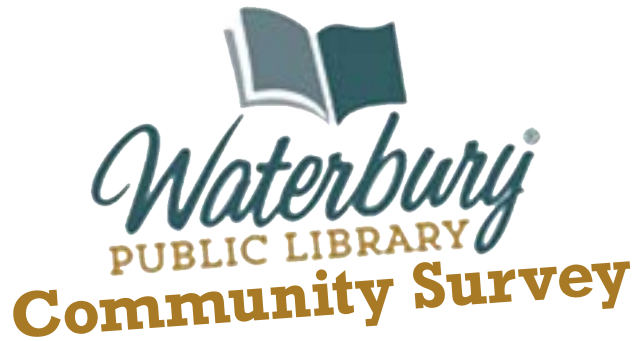
More than half of Waterbury's population over 25 years old had bachelor's degrees and another 42.7% had graduated from high school. However, 4.2% had less than a high school degree.

Today, the internet is seen as essential for both learning and entertainment. However, 1.7% of Waterbury's households did not have a computer in 2021 and almost 4.7% did not have a broadband subscription.

Waterbury's July 2021 median household income was \$92,231. However, 10.1% were living in poverty.

Source: United States Census Bureau

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/waterburytownwashingtoncountyvermont.VT/INC110220#INC110220>



Waterbury
PUBLIC LIBRARY
Community Survey

Please complete the following survey so that we can better serve our community. The results of this survey will be used to inform Waterbury Public Library's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan, and we want to know what our community wants and needs. We appreciate your help! Answers will remain anonymous unless you choose to share your contact information.

1. What town do you live in? Waterbury Duxbury Other: _____

2. How often do you visit the library?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple times a week | <input type="checkbox"/> A few times a year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly | <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly | <input type="checkbox"/> Never |

3. Do you or someone in your household have a Waterbury Public Library Card? Yes No

4. If you do not use the library, why not? Check all that apply.

- Library hours don't work with my schedule.
- The library doesn't have the materials I want.
- The library doesn't have the services I need.
- I am homebound and not able to access in person.
- I purchase my books, movies, and streaming services.
- Other: _____
- I use the library's services.

5. How do you hear about library programs and services? Check all that apply.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library website | <input type="checkbox"/> WDEV radio station |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library email newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Signs or flyers | <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social media | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Front Porch Forum | |

6. Where do you think the library should focus its resources over the next several years in order to increase its value to you and the community? Please choose your top **four** answers.

- Books
- DVDs
- Audiobooks
- Digital content (downloadable/streaming books, movies, etc.)
- Research databases
- Library of Things (non-traditional collection items like cake pans, games, museum passes, snowshoes, etc.)
- Adult programs
- Teen programs
- Children's programs
- Longer or different hours
- Technology assistance
- Equipment for patron use (Cricut machine, 3D printer, etc.)
- Delivery of books to the homebound
- More small meeting room space
- Designated space for teens
- Other: _____

7. Please indicate how you feel about the following statements:

I feel welcome and safe at the library.	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
The library does not discriminate against people based on their age, race, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, or housing status.	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Library staff are knowledgeable and will help me find factual information to answer my questions.	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Library staff are available when I need them and are courteous.	Agree	Neutral	Disagree

8. If you could change one thing about the library, what would it be?

9. Please indicate if you are interested in any of the following:

Would you like to take part in a focus group to further help with our strategic planning?	Yes	No
Would you like to get involved with the Friends of the Waterbury Public Library? The Friends group is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to raise funds for the library.	Yes	No
Would you like to be added to the library's email list to receive the monthly newsletter?	Yes	No

Please provide your name and contact information if you answered "Yes" in the previous question.

Thank you for completing our survey!



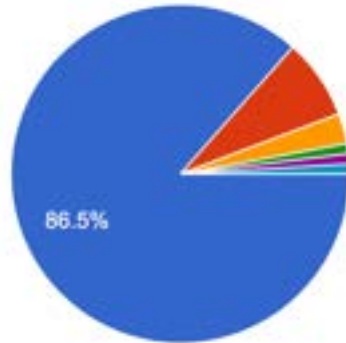
a place to connect, inspire and learn

<p>CONTACT</p> <p>802-244-7036</p> <p>WaterburyPublicLibrary.com</p>	<p>HOURS</p> <p>Monday 10 AM - 8 PM Tuesday 10 AM - 8 PM Wednesday 10 AM - 8 PM Thursday 10 AM - 5 PM Friday 10 AM - 5 PM Saturday 9 AM - 1 PM Sunday Closed</p>	<p>VISIT</p> <p>28 North Main Street Waterbury, VT 05676</p> <p><i>BEHIND THE WATERBURY MUNICIPAL OFFICES</i></p>
---	---	--

Appendix 3: Survey Results

What town do you live in?

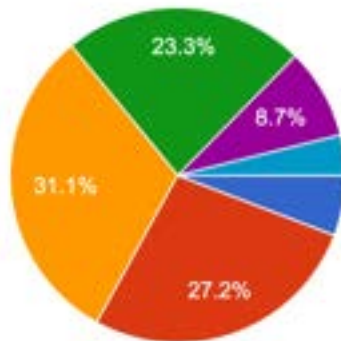
104 responses



- Waterbury
- Duxbury
- Waterbury Center
- Bolton
- waterbury center
- Moretown

How often do you visit the library?

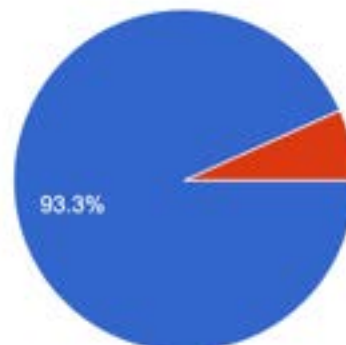
103 responses



- Multiple times a week
- Weekly
- Monthly
- A few times a year
- Rarely
- Never

Do you have a Waterbury Public Library Card?

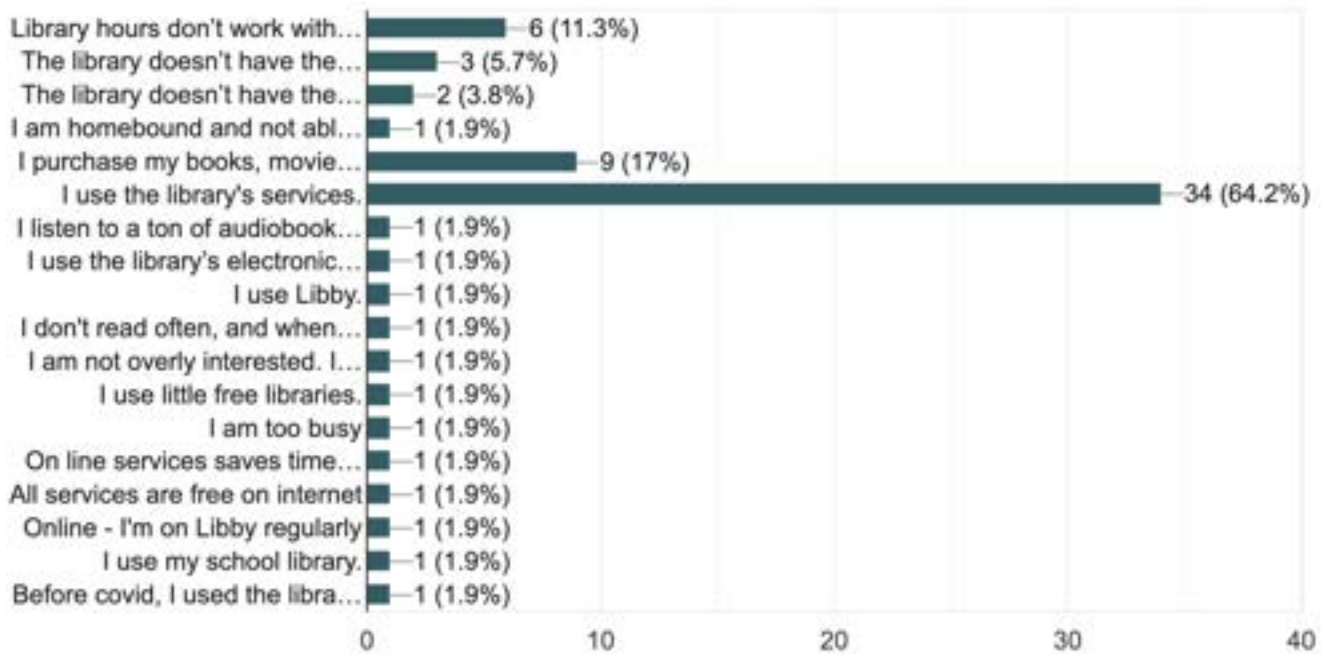
104 responses



- Yes
- No

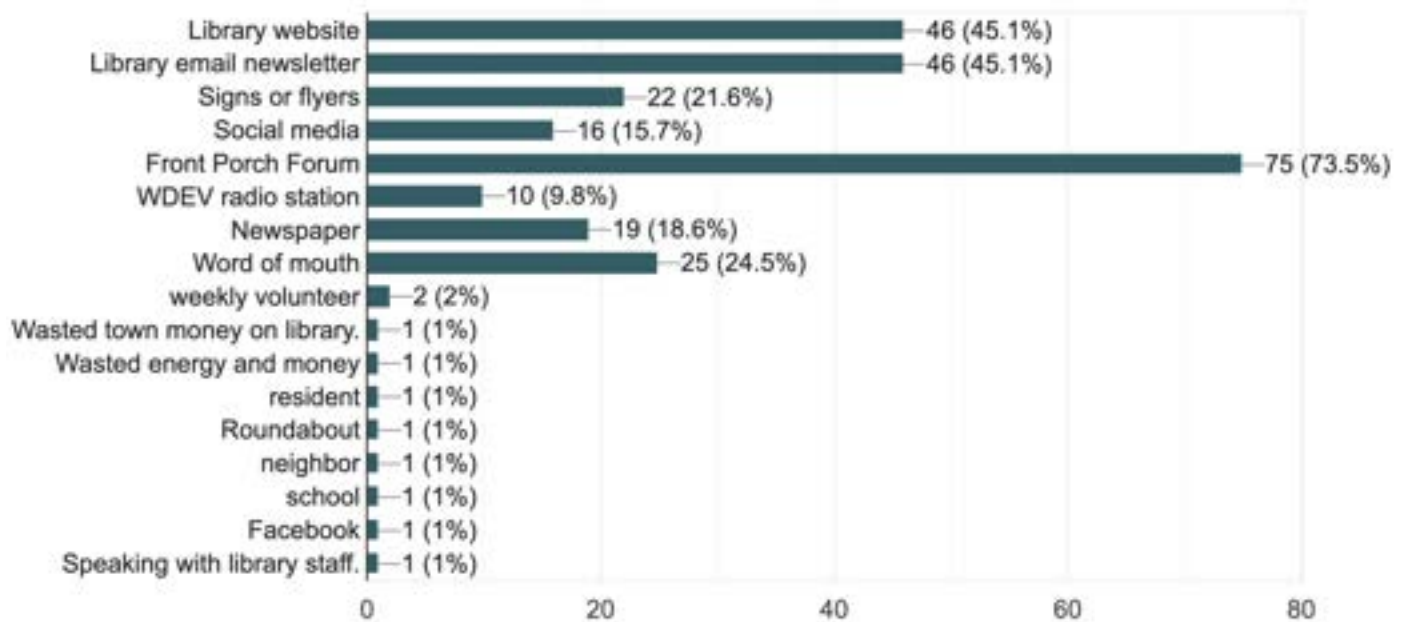
If you do not use the library, why not? Check all that apply.

53 responses



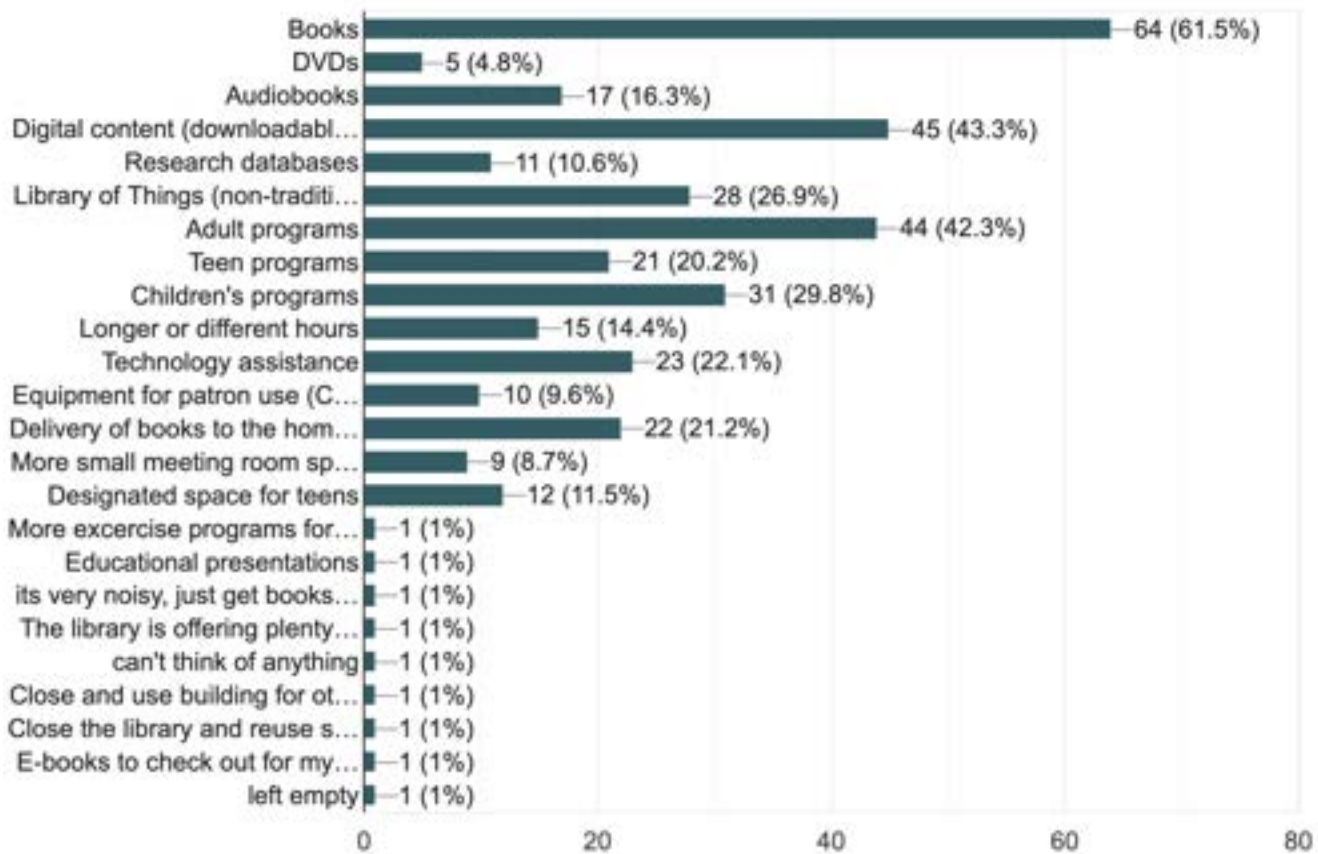
How do you hear about library programs and services? Check all that apply.

102 responses

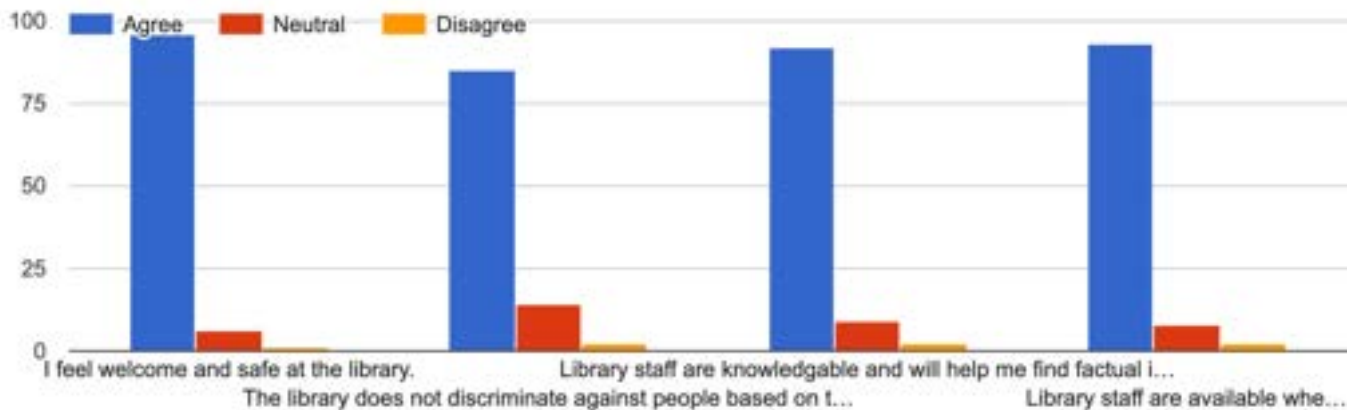


Where do you think the library should focus its resources over the next several years in order to increase its value to you and the community?

104 responses



Please indicate how you feel about the following statements.



If you could change one thing about the library, what would it be?

- Nothing, keep it up! Our kids love Ms. Cynthia and her activities
- More awesome kids programming
- Hours! I work and it is so hard to make it to the library. I'm glad for digital services to help, but would love having weekday evening hours to browse, work/study, use the rooms, etc.
- An expanded children's collection - our kids go through books SO quickly and they seem to have exhausted some of the collection. Interlibrary loan is wonderful, but a little slower. Still, we are grateful, and many of our suggestions have been purchased!
- More service for homebound or without transportation
- being able to sign up for private study room for more than 1 hr. or a study pod or 2
- Open Sunday
- I would like to see more programs for people who are Religious, traditional and conservative. There are few resources for these people. That is why I stated above that the library does discriminate; the programs and materials lean heavily to the left politically and there is a paucity of Christian resources. This leaves religious and traditional people feeling dismissed. Thank you.
- Clarify whether Waterbury Cares is still up and running, and if the library is the point of contact.
- Open for longer hours on the weekend
- Please order Wonderbooks for kids with learning disabilities: <https://playaway.com/wonderbook/>
- thanks
- better selection of nonfiction books and open this nights and to 4pm sat in winter
- I would double its budget.
- I wish my library card could be digital. (Maybe it can already? Idk.)
- more foreign language resources
- More copies of popular e-books
- Open longer on Saturday
- More marketing about services other than books.
- I wish the library retained more classic books.
- That upstairs was quieter. Due to the mezzanine layout, when a ton of people talk downstairs at the checkout desk or staff meetings or kiddo programming, it really Carrie's upstairs.
- later hours on Saturdays
- More programs for elementary school kids after school and on weekends.
- Online catalogs and books to borrow.
- Hours on weekends
- Longer weekend hours and turning off the lights at nighttime. We live on Winooski St and the lights are very bright all night long. Other than that small comment this library is amazing. We are so lucky to have you!
- Don't go woke.
- more extensive ebook selection
- More hours
- Open on Sundays
- more quiet areas for reading
- nothing, it is great, staff is great
- Close it
- Close and use space for other town needs
- More seating area
- To enhance the Children's Section!
- Upgrades - trains, play kitchen, games, toys
- More comfy chairs

- Higher profile with popular authors
- Whole family could use such a card = loyalty
- Right now, I wouldn't change anything. It works well.
- I love the library and can't think of anything except I would add a shade canopy near the word garden for the warm months
- more manga
- Technology assistance and tutoring programs!
- I think it's a great resource - we just don't get there that often. My son did GREAT art classes after school, You could off afterschool programs & tutoring/enrichment programs
- Designated space for teens
- It would be quieter
- Bringing the cafe back
- Finding ways to include teens more (Though, this has improved in recent years.)
- open longer hours
- Technology assistance and delivery of books to the homebound - bookmobile?
- Continue w/ a mix of evening seminars for adults, esp. during the winter (i.e. like the "ghost meeting) - great fun and some interesting topics - maybe add a craft type event - i.e. making a Christmas ornament or something on that line
- expand garden - more outside programs - gazebo
- Children's programs & technology assistance
- Outside meeting space
- More private work room space. Everything else is just right!
- Audiobooks w/ hard copy of books attached
- I wish my library card worked at all area libraries
- Move the local history and magazine collections away from the sitting area. They are too close for easy browsing.
- Sometimes I come here to do homework but depending on the time of day/how busy it is, I have a hard time concentrating because of the noise level. I realize rooms are available to sign out where it's quieter, but I prefer to use the smaller desks by the windows rather than shut myself in an office. Perhaps there could be a gentle request as patrons enter to keep their voices lowered?
- Clear, regular opportunities to volunteer.
- It's not the library that needs changing ... it's making time in my schedule to take advantage of all the great programming offered and visiting more often and reading more.
- Bring back Lego club!!'
- Easier catalog/inter loan search
- More mystery stories, less romance novels, more biographies & historical information.
- Be open on Sunday
- More outreach to home daycares and mobile home parks
- Sometimes I come here to do homework but depending on the time of day/how busy it is, I have a hard time concentrating because of the noise level. I realize rooms are available to sign out where it's quieter, but I prefer to use the smaller desks by the windows rather than shut myself in an office. Perhaps there could be a gentle request as patrons enter to keep their voices lowered?
- Longer hours on weekends, equipment for patron use

Appendix 4: Meeting and Interview Notes

Following are the notes taken by Planning Committee members at focus group meetings and in one-on-one interviews with a range of community members. These notes are informal and served to inform the planning process. Names of participants have been removed to protect their anonymity.

Public Meeting Notes

Taken by Deanna King

September 28th 2022

What is the library doing well? Specific collections, programming, space, etc.

- Writing group, ILL, children's books, connection to digital audiobooks for driving, programming, body poetry, a community place to connect, Libby, tourist stop, volunteer opportunity, being part of the community, lively and beautiful spot to be, movement classes everyday.
- What about more space?
- What about funding from folks that are from outside the community?
- Feedback at the desk about in person programming
- Consumer reports
- Printing
- Bookable spaces
- Tech help
- Instagram
- Art/gallery space
- Accessible space

What can be improved?

- Advertise that wifi is available
- Useful nontraditional items to borrow: fishing poles, season passes, cross country skis, pickleball, VHS, slide converter
- Advertise more! = FPF, newspapers at the supermarket, laundromat
- OPEN HOUSE to meet the library

What should the library's priorities be over the next 5 years?

- Grants
- Folks probably don't understand what the modern library provides

Who are we serving well in the community? Who are we missing?

- Resources for English language learners
 - Maybe learn more through the schools
 - Volunteer opportunity
- Connection with Adult Education across the street
- Advertise at the bulletin boards
- Liaisons with other groups in town to share information

What can we do to be a welcoming, inclusive space for all?

- Welcome to the library program for people to see “behind the scenes” and get to know what is available
- Library appreciation day

Staff Focus Group Meeting Notes
Taken by Deanna King
September 27th 2022

What is the library doing well?

- Collection development has been improving, more non fiction specifically political books, sports, childrens, diverse books are important.
- Books on display catch your eye and then get taken out.
- Book sale display is great.
- Patron service - give the patron the book and deal with the problem later

What can be improved?

- Wages!
- Benefits!
- Staff room is needed for meals and privacy during breaks, there isn't even a place to take a phone call,
- maybe use some of the town offices for tech help or just for having a private lunch spot
- More meeting rooms
- Have a real kitchen with stove for programs

What complaint (and complement) do you hear most from library patrons?

- Compliments at adult programs
- Library programs used to have to be scattered at different locations now everything is at the library again
- Excitement from people about in person programs again now that COVID has been around a while
- Complaints about the noise
- Middle schoolers/pokemon club can be noisy, but they are just having fun and being kids
- Not everyone understands that you can talk in the library and it's okay

What should the library's priorities be in the coming 5 years?

- Library more out and about in the community
- More outreach
- Connect with homebound seniors and do delivery—hoping to setup by spring
- Connect more with local preschools
- 1000 books before kindergarten

Are there members or groups in the community the library serves better than others? Do you have ideas on reaching out to those under-served populations?

- Made progress in this area already
- People without internet might be underserved, it's hard to tell

- D&D has been bringing in young adults!
- Collaborate with other area libraries to help spread the word

Is there anything you'd like to mention that we haven't discussed?

- Power in the garden for music programs in the summertime
- Stairs to the pavilion
- Tech help is getting to be social services and that is hard, there needs to be more support, more people, with the aging population it is going to be a problem for a while
- Lots of need for tax help, not enough private space
- Resources for job seekers
- People trust the library for help, there isn't anywhere else to go for free help
- Payment for duxbury cards is a barrier, it needs to be easier to make the payment to duxbury, or maybe a smaller amount than \$25, credit card accepted would be better too

What would make the library a better working environment within the next five years?

- Add to room reservations that access to SAL room might be interrupted by library staff
- Stuff in cabinets needs to be secured so the public doesn't have access
- Put coffee out in the cafe again
- Teen space!
- More space for remote workers because they use up the rooms

Interview with Staff Member

Taken by Rachel Muse

October 3rd 2022

What does the library do well?

- Very welcoming, people feel comfortable here
- Great programs with a lot of variety for all ages
- Great, diverse collection

What could be improved?

- Nothing!
- Maybe meeting rooms - more space, more quiet space for patrons

Patron complaints:

- Plants aren't taken care of well enough
- Younger patrons too noisy/in the way at the public computers

Patron compliments:

- The staff! They like the staff and what Rachel is doing
- Changes to book processing (ISBN barcodes no longer covered up, etc)
- They love the displays

Priorities for the next five years:

- Raise awareness of what the library does, word of mouth seems to be what works best for the library in Waterbury
- Find a way to give people more space

How do we reach underserved populations?

- New/alternative places to hang posters
- Maybe flyers go out with food at the Food Shelf
- Create and promote a book delivery service

What would make this a better working environment?

- Better space for staff - break room/offices
- But overall, this place is just great!

**Teen Focus Group
Report by Maureen White
September 27th 2022**

Facilitator – a local licensed therapist who specializes in teens and preteens.

Important comments from kids – they feel “safe” and don’t feel like people are annoyed by them when they walk in. Actual quotes from the kids: They love the library, the library is the best. They come to the library to get out of their homes, this is a safe space for them to be.

They appreciate that the groups draw a certain peer group. Some from their school, but not all from their school. That is a good thing. The way the program is set up it allows the community teens to self select who is there, and that works for the group.

Things they like

- Library has more gay books than school library
- The rocks outside. Word garden
- Appreciate that the library is close to the soccer fields. When siblings are playing they can come to the library and hang out. They are allowed to do that.
- Overall, they are pretty content with the space.
- Don’t care that YA section is along the outer wall.
- They check out books sometimes, and they would check out more if the library had more books that they like. They would like more gay books and they specifically said they would like manga. They were very specific on that
- Would like couches.

Group topics

- An open teen night. Depends on when, and who comes, cautiously “intrigued” but if everyone from school came, it would be a problem. Because not all their peers at school feel safe. And the group that self selects by coming to these programs does feel safe. An open teen night would just be like school.
- Huge event is less likely to work for them.

- But small programs allows them to self-select.

Topics

- Anime club
- Anything LGBT+
- It would be “cool” to have a group where they could learn to draw anime
- Clear that they like the groups that they currently have
- Clear that it’s not as much about the topic of the group, as it is for them to be in a safe space with each other

How they find out

One said website. Most is word of mouth through friends.

Valuable to them that they can come to the group, be themselves, they are not judged, they feel safe, and they can get out of their homes.

According to our facilitator: They clearly felt safe, affirmed, respected and validated at the Library. With LGBT+ youth being part of this group, and saying this is a safe place where their identity is validated and respected, the library is actively reducing the risk of teens dying by suicide. In her experience, an atmosphere that is safe and validating like what she saw is created by how the adults interact with them, more than anything else. Furniture and space wouldn’t change that.

Interview with a Parent Taken by Rachel Muse October 11th 2022

Youth programming:

- Misses Lego and other more STEM-based programming
- Would like to see something along the lines of cartooning/comics
- Thinks programs should be less about books and more about getting kids through the door
- Maybe something like drop-in video games?
- Afternoons, especially Friday afternoons, are already overwhelming - maybe find alternative times for program

Adult programming:

- Would love to see an adult book club more like the Queer Reads group - maybe a Banned Books club

Where else do they go for programs?

- Healthy Living, South Burlington
- Martial arts/gymnastics

Collection

- Youth collection is really diverse

- Because we homeschool, we get a LOT through ILL

Space

- Would love to see something like an outdoor classroom space, like at North Branch Nature Center

Equity & Inclusion

- While we have never NOT felt welcome here, it's gotten even better in the past year or so
- Staff have become a little more diverse
- Has been very involved in DEI initiatives and anti-racism (evaluating policies, hiring practices, reviewed and expanded discrimination statement, etc...) Could be helpful as we take on some of that work

Brainstorming ideas:

- Most of our board game and RPG game programs are targeted at adults/teens - how about family/mixed age groups?
- More spooky stuff! Maybe a ghost walk?

Interview with a Patron

Taken by Maureen White

October 19, 2022

What is the library doing well? Specific collections, programming, space, etc.

- Programming is varied and interesting. Appreciate the return to the Dewey Decimal system. Enjoyed, and found useful, the gardening programming pre-pandemic

What can be improved?

- Increased collection? The catalog computers are very difficult to use – slow response, awkward to use physically.

What can we do to be a welcoming, inclusive space for all?

- I find the Library to be very welcoming. A bright, cheerful place.

Programming

What do you want to learn about? What types of library programming would you like to see in the next several years? Lectures? Hands-on workshops? Small or large discussion groups? One-on-one help sessions?

- Bread and butter information and concerns: job seeking, housing, common economic and legal questions
- Current/historical events
- Diversity and inclusion
- New books and resources
- Computers/technology
- Children/young adult programs: 1-5, 6-10, 10-15, 15-19

- Where else do you attend events/lectures and what do you enjoy about them? Other libraries? Businesses? Nonprofits? I mostly do zoom events, usually through faith communities or cultural organizations

Collections

- Where do you spend time when you come to the library? What areas of the collection do you use: adult books, children's books, DVD, Library of Things, digital books, etc.
 - DVDs, Books on CD, adult books – mostly non-fiction
 - Are there areas you'd like to see expanded? Areas you don't use at all?
- Do you find that you can access specific books when you want them? Do you find the wait times for new books or books borrowed from other libraries to be acceptable or too long?
 - This varies depending on location and demand. Usually ILL works very well.
- Do you use digital books and find those collections to be satisfying? What is your experience with wait times with those books? Are there digital services you'd like to see beyond the ones that are offered? – N/A
- What is the library doing well? – Seems to be very responsive to community needs and requests.



STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2027

OUR MISSION - TO INSPIRE OUR COMMUNITY TO LEARN, CONNECT AND THRIVE

In the spring of 2022, a dedicated committee set out to identify what the Waterbury community wants and needs from its public library. Data was gathered over several months through focus groups, one-on-one interviews and community surveys.

Based on these results three overarching goals were identified along with a multitude of ideas to pursue in the coming years. Each goal and its related objectives represents a component of the community's vision for the future of the Waterbury Public Library.

AWARENESS AND OUTREACH

To enhance the Library's reputation as a vibrant, valuable and meaningful community resource, engaging a diverse population of users and partners, both inside and outside the building.

PEOPLE AND PLACE

To expand the Library's role as a welcoming, useful, accessible and safe space, meeting the needs of all community members, partners and staff.

COLLECTIONS AND PROGRAMS

To ensure that the Library provides a diverse, relevant and thoughtful range of books, digital resources and programming aimed at fostering life-long learning and growth.

*The full strategic plan will be available on our website by winter 2023 at:
waterburypubliclibrary.com/strategic-plan*

Questions and comments can be directed to Library Director Rachel Muse.