Bibliothèque de
SDG
Library

MOVING FORWARD
Strategic Plan 2018 -2022

Introduction

Strategic planning is a process for making informed decisions that shape and guide the essence of what an organization is, what it does for whom, and what it could and should be in the future. It is the collective work of engaging in big picture thinking, and then tying day-to-day practical-ities to the big picture (from: _Creating the Future You've Imagined: a guide to essential planning; Southern Ontario Library Service, 2007_). Best developed every 4-5 years, strategic plans ensure that organizations stay focussed on achieva-ble goals while keeping our operations on course.

Written in 2012, the SD&G County Library's _Long-Term Strategic Plan, 2012-2021_ was comprised of four key strategies:

1. _Engage the Community_

2. _Enhance Service Delivery_

3. _Build Internal Capacity_

4. _Secure Sustainable Funding._

In the plan, it was noted that "The Plan focuses on continuing to do what we do well and changing what we must. Although we will be working on all four strategies, each strategy is highly dependent on the oth-ers. We cannot engage the community without enhancing our service delivery, and our ability to enhance service delivery relies on building our internal capacity and securing sustainable funding. It also demands that we provide better facilities."

Many of the goals set in that Plan have been achieved, to a greater or lesser degree over the last six years. For example, the Library now offers digital services, "makerspace activities" (both low and high tech), and municipal services (eg. garbage tag and dog tag sales, Commissioner of Oaths authorization). Our collec-tions (both print and digital) have greatly improved through careful selection and maintenance practises, as seen in increased circulation and reduced reliance on inter-library loan requests. Most of our branches are now fully AODA-compliant. Our partnerships with local and regional historical sites have been very successful, with the lending of Museum Passes. We have created 'Communications and Marketing' staff positions to "get the word out" about the Library, and we have participated a wide range of outreach op-portunities; this continues to be a priority, even as some natural communication lines are gone or have shifted (some community newspapers have gone and some communities no longer have a school through which communication pieces can be circulated).

Our Present Situation

Before trying to set directions for the future, it's crucial to establish as clear a picture as possible of our Library's present situation.

SDG is growing, particularly in those areas within commuting distance of Ottawa. However, overall population growth remains modest. Our community profile is somewhat different than the Ontario average: SDG has an older population, somewhat lower household incomes and fewer households with children. The community is a mix of rural and urban settlements covering a large geographical area.

Population: United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry – **65,303** *(Statistics Canada, 2016 Census)*

	Male*	Female*	Prominent Age Groups**
North Dundas	49.3%	50.7%	15-64 – 60.2%; 65+ – 24.8%
South Dundas	48.9%	51.1%	15-64 – 64.7%; 65+ – 18.4%
North Stormont	51.5%	48.5%	15-64 – 67.5%; 65+ – 14.3%
South Stormont	50.5%	49.5%	15-64 – 64.8%; 65+ -- 19.2%
North Glengarry	49.1%	51.9%	15-64 – 61.6%; 65+ -- 24.3%
South Glengarry	50.5%	49.5%	15-25 – 63.7%; 65+ -- 22.1%

*Provincially, 48.8% of the population is Male, and 51.2% are Female.

**Prominent Age Groups in Ontario: 15-64 – 66.8%; 65+ – 16.7%

Looking forward, SDG "is expected to grow by 2,300 residents...to a 2036 Census population of 67,400 residents." *(United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Official Plan, 2017)*. The most substantial growth is forecasted to take place in North Dundas, while North Glengarry may see a decline of 0.1% during the same period. Population trends may affect how the Library determines the number of service points it has – and where – and may tailor the type of services it offers at specific locations (eg. youth services vs. mature adult services; focus on education vs. focus on creative expression).

Current programs and services *(from 2017 MTCS Annual Survey of Public Libraries)*

Print Collections – 64,883 titles, 95,204 items

Circulation of Collections – 246,994

Programs – 1,288 programs offered, 17,002 attendees – average attendance per program = 7 children, 12 teens, 13 adults

Current users

Registered Members of Library – 13,055 →19.9% of residents of SDG are members of the Library

Active Cardholders (*used in the past 2 years*) – 9,872

Borrowers – 6,045

Visitors – 129,538 (in-branch), 639,444 (virtual), 3,318 (community outreach)

Through casual conversation and during formal exercises, the SDG Library's public service staff have provided a wealth of information about what we do well, and where we could – and should – improve. Their comments include:

As an organization

We are moving forward with the 21st Century – following trends, being open to suggestions, and continuing to move forward with new ideas and innovations.

We are growing in sophistication and technology.

We are more visible and relevant within our communities – more accessible, both physically and digitally.

We are still "traditional" in many of the things we do, but we are doing things to be more "untraditional" as well.

What we do well

We excel at customer service.

We've got a very good product overall.

We hire great people – we have many excellent staff, who are well supported by their supervisors and Library administration.

We are good partners with our community – we do a lot of outreach, and are open to ideas and suggestions, while meeting community needs (ie. dog tags, garbage bags, etc.).

We are good partners with our community!

Where we could improve

We need to connect to non-users, and connect to specific demographics – we need to market ourselves more than ever, especially to non-users and under-served demographics, such as millennials and teens.

Our non-fiction collections must improve to meet current and future information needs.

Our internal communications are getting better, but are still "a work in progress".

We need to be open more hours, especially at key Resource locations – having more hours to allow for earlier opening, particularly on Mondays, would be a great enhancement to Library services.

What barriers stand in our way?

Public service staff across the system are working only a few hours per shift over many days – staff would like to work more to develop their skills; we risk losing staff due to limited hours that can be offered.

Staff are working alone in remote branch locations. This is a health and safety risk, and provides very little opportunity for colleagues to learn together and enhance Library services to the public; as well, work often cannot get done during a three to five-hour shift.

There is a perception of competition from other sources of information (aka "Google") from funders, stakeholders and staff.

Under-funding is the biggest barrier to achieving our goals – provincial funding levels have long been stagnant, and municipal funding goes mostly to meet current staffing levels.

How can we overcome these barriers?

We need to improve our staffing levels; we would benefit from having another professional librarian, as well as full-time staff at each of our Resource branches, along with multiple "front-line" staff working together.

In achieving the above, we could develop better training tools for new technologies, improve our collections and their access, be responsive to changing demographic needs, and be able to introduce new technologies without internal fear or resistance.

The Library needs to secure more funding; in part, this should include fundraising efforts, to show that the Library is invested in improving our services.

We must work for continued growth in membership and in use of the SDG Library.

Funding continues to be recognized as an "undertow" (an issue that is pulling us down) to making meaningful improvements to Library services in the long term. The Strategic Plan identified the need to "secure sustainable funding". In truth, annual funding levels have increased very little, with various limited-term grant opportunities being used to fund most of the Library's new initiatives (NOTE: Closing three under-performing and inaccessible branches allowed the Library to re-allocate resources to increase hours of operation). Although gradually increasing the amount of rent paid for our 15 branch facilities has put the Library in a better position with the local municipalities that provide those facilities, other – more visible – service improvements have been delayed or "reigned in" as a result.

As well, the Library still has a long way to go to achieving many of even the most basic requirements that would meet provincial standards, especially in the size of our branch facilities and our staffing levels. We currently have many very small branches, with only one (Alexandria) meeting the minimum recommended square footage – for a neighbourhood branch! We continue to ask (exclusively female) part-time employees to work alone for three- to five-hour shifts in remote branch locations, with only the most rudimentary security measures in place. Extended hours of operation recently implemented at most branches means that even staff working at the same branch only meet as one shift ends and the next one begins; this does not offer any opportunity on an ongoing basis for staff to learn together, share ideas, or take on any extra projects. Those fall on the few full-time (managerial) employees employed in Library Services to accomplish, in addition to their other significant responsibilities.

The SDG Library should seek alignment with the Counties' Strategic Priorities, as the Library's primary funding body:

> Preserve enhance historical, cultural, tourism & recreational features to maintain quality of life;
>
> Plan for economic developments;
>
> Inventory of infrastructure; and
>
> Greater local government coordination in delivery of services.

By aligning our strategic goals with larger community priorities, and shifting the conversation from what the Library wants to what SDG and its residents want – and how the Library can help – we will be adding value, thus integrating the SDG Library into local and regional efforts to achieve their own goals.

The Plan – Moving Forward

This new Strategic Plan for the SDG Library is the compilation of work done by the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry County Library Board, the Library's management and administrative team, with input from all members of the Library's public service team – front-line staff who work and live in the communities served by the Library.

With additional consultative input from the Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS), and from members of the public who have attended regular Library Board meetings over the last several months (starting in December, 2017), a rich body of information, suggestions and options have been gathered. The Director of Library Services – in her dual role as Secretary to the Library Board and as CEO of the Library – has had the responsibility of shaping all this information into the document presented here.

This strategic planning process has been very much like charting a course for a sailing adventure. We have "mapped" our route for the next four to five years as if our boat was tied up at the pier. In reality, this is not the case! The Library has at the same time been delivering services in a myriad of ways, both well-established (eg. programs, collection lending) and with newly-introduced offerings, such as shared municipal services, tourist information kiosks, countless "maker" activities, alternative service delivery sites, and access to new technologies, to name just a few.

We have made several recent changes, and are now set to meet the possibilities of the next several years of progressive public library services.

Our Name: *SDG Library*

From now on, the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry County Library – our legal name – will operate as the 'SDG Library'. We have dropped the "&" from our former acronym. The Library is adopting this new standard in an effort create consistency across organizations and in particular, the SDG Counties. Not only is the SDG Library dropping the ampersand, it will no longer be using "County". Removing the word "county" creates more visual space, allowing the Library to generate greater brand recognition. The removal of "county" also makes for a shorter French translation that is easier to read.

Our Logo:

The new SDG Library logo uses book "pages" to represent the six local municipalities that make up the Counties. To create consistency, the SDG Library is using the same logo colours as the Counties' logo, with colour choices inspired by the river, agriculture, land and sky. They symbolize the pure nature, energy and vitality of this region. The bottom "pages" represent the traditional library, while the upper portion represents a departure from the traditional. Together they resemble wheat, a symbol of our rural setting.

The new SDG Library logo acknowledges a changing library landscape. The Library is looking to the future while not forgetting its roots, purpose and community.

Our Mission:

Connect. Create. Explore.

We help people connect to the vast universe of information with free access to the Internet and to lots of subject databases. We provide opportunities for people to connect with each other – at programs, through social media and over shared interests, like book clubs. We encourage creative expression with art displays, "maker" events, and in the provision of "how to" guides. We invite people to explore their unique personal interests, and facilitate ways to find a job, start a business, travel to a new place, or try a new activity.

Our Vision:

The SDG Library connects people with ideas, their community and the wider world through innovative services, resources for literacy, independent learning, creative expression, leisure and civic engagement.

The Library's new Vision Statement is clear and concise, and not bogged down in lofty language. The message is compelling, and conveys the Library's values of inclusion, life-long learning, recreation, and innovation.

Our Goals & Objectives

As a trusted community resource, we must continue to:

- Invest in technology;

- Transition our collections from primarily paper-based to digital/electronic;

- Strengthen our staff and patron relationships, and our position as a social gathering place;

- Tap into the capabilities of Council as well as other County departments and organizations; and

- Track and adapt to new trends.

To move forward in the provision of new, meaningful public library services to <u>all</u>, and to attract those who have yet to discover them, we need to change:

- How we are perceived by a broad base of the community that doesn't use our services;

- How we target different segments of the community, particularly those not using our services, and design and deliver relevant services for them;

- Our mindset of "the library as a place" and increasingly be prepared to take the library outside of the building;

- Our tendency to go it alone instead of collaborating with other service providers to create unique services that neither we nor our collaborators could deliver alone;

- Our funding levels by demonstrating our value to the community and to Council; and

- Our service delivery and facility models.

> **Our Specific Goals are comprised of five key goals, and strategies for achieving those goals:**

GOAL -- ***Change the Perception of the Library in Our Communities***

> OBJECTIVES
>
> > Provide more awareness of what the Library is offering to the public, and to our stakeholders and/or funders;
> >
> > Demonstrate that the Library is not fusty and out-of-touch, but is a vibrant, current, and natural gathering place within our communities for people to "connect, create and explore"; and
> >
> > Showcase how the Library brings value to people's lives.

GOAL – Preserve our Local History for Future Generations

OBJECTIVES

Digitize local history materials, especially those of which the Library owns only one copy;

Bring our past to life with special events, community partnerships and programs that celebrate our history;

Involve young people in activities that brings them into contact with their heritage; and

Work with local archives groups and museums.

GOAL – Commit to Mobile Library Services

OBJECTIVES

Regularly visit schools, retirement residences and special needs organizations to bring Library services to those who cannot get to a "bricks and mortar" facility;

Create services and resources that can be accessed digitally and/or in "untraditional" settings;

Invest in a "Library on Wheels" and develop processes and logistics that gets Library services to underserved areas, or where branch facilities do not exist; and

Assess the Library's IT and connectivity needs, including the number of mobile WiFi "hotspots" required.

GOAL – Safeguard and Enhance Funding Levels

OBJECTIVES

Develop a broad-based Fundraising Strategy;

Establish an annual giving program that identifies a specific future acquisition or "wish list" item;

Increase funding for collections, that allows the Library to effectively offer material to the public in both tangible and digital formats, while meeting the needs and interests of all those who wish to access them;

Refuse to trade off existing expenditures in order to be able to introduce new initiatives, but be empowered to divest of "legacy" activities if they no longer serve their intended purpose;

Demonstrate the value of strategic purchases made to funders and stakeholders on a regular basis; and

Create meaningful programs and projects that may require additional funding to succeed.

GOAL – Review and Evaluate the Library's Collections and Services

OBJECTIVES

Adopt a methodology to determine "succession planning" for Library users, to determine which collections and services are relevant and viable, and which should be divested of;

See if new users are finding the materials that they wish to read today and into the future;

Create opportunities for leadership and learning within the organization, and develop skills and competencies to meet the needs of a changing library profession; and

Renew some older campaign ideas to supplement the present outreach.

Performance Measures

How will we know whether we've achieved our goal(s)? How do we measure success or failure?
Many tools are currently available to help us measure how well we are doing; some of those tools we already use. They include:

- Anecdotal feedback from patrons;

- Analysis of Monthly/Annual usage statistics and what they mean; and

- Tracking attendance at Library programs and events.

The importance of our staff is recognized and valued. We will use their perspectives in measuring our progress as an organization by:

- Seeking staff satisfaction feedback; and

- Supporting training/development certification.

Finally, we will introduce new and/or revised means over the term of this Plan as a way to measure our performance and gauge public satisfaction with the Library's services, including:

- Rewards incentives; and

- User surveys.

We will also remain open to incorporating additional performance benchmarks to measure our successes or failures as they present themselves in the form of new evaluation tools, and through continuous self-reflection