

GREATER SUDBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY

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2026-2028 Strategic Plan

Welcome To Our New Strategic Plan

The **2026-2028 Strategic Plan** marks a new chapter for the Greater Sudbury Public Library and the community we serve, a chapter defined by a renewed sense of purpose and possibility. As our city continues to grow, diversify, and adapt to rapid social and technological change, the library represents a vital public space where everyone is welcome to explore, learn, and connect. We are guided through this next chapter by our refocused mission:

We connect our community, igniting curiosity, creativity, and learning by providing free and equitable access to information, engaging experiences, and opportunities for collaboration.

Through an extensive engagement process residents of Greater Sudbury made it clear that they continue to value the Library and the services we deliver. This engagement process also helped us develop a shared vision of a public library system that continues to evolve and improve these services, adapting to the current and emerging needs expressed by our community. To achieve this vision, we will maintain the library services our community has come to count on while also strengthening our role as a community hub, reimagining and enhancing our spaces, amplifying the Library's presence in our community, and building our capacity as an organization for sustainable growth and lasting impact.

This plan is about unearthing our potential: transforming opportunities into outcomes which improve the wellbeing of all. Together we will achieve the vision of a thriving and vibrant community empowered by universal access to information, where everyone has the opportunity to learn, to create, and to share.



Brian Harding
CEO and Chief Librarian,
Greater Sudbury Public Library



Michael Bellmore
Chair, Greater Sudbury Public
Library Board

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GSPL Land Acknowledgement

The Greater Sudbury Public Library serves a community located on the lands of the Anishnawbek Peoples and within the territory of the Robinson Huron Treaty of 1850.

This is the traditional territory of Atikameksheng Anishnawbek, the Wahnapiatae First Nation and the Sagamok First Nation. Greater Sudbury Public Library gratefully acknowledges these Indigenous Nations for their guardianship of this land.

Commitment to Truth and Reconciliation

The Greater Sudbury Public Library is a committed partner to the process of reconciliation with First Nations and Urban Indigenous communities. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was established in 2008 and investigated the lasting impacts of the Canadian residential school system until the Commission's conclusion in 2015. The TRC's findings and 94 Calls to Action identify a path to redress the legacy of residential schools and to advance the process of reconciliation. The Greater Sudbury Public Library recognizes the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and is committed to supporting, implementing, and advocating for the Commission's Calls to Action.

We recognize that Reconciliation is an ongoing process, a process which we must commit to in both our daily actions as well as our long-term planning. GSPL is committed to furthering reconciliation by building strong relationships with Indigenous Peoples, ensuring that Library spaces are safe and welcoming for all, developing library programs and services that meet the needs of Indigenous members of the community, and using the Library's voice to publicly advocate for Reconciliation.

While the following Strategic Plan identifies the Library's strategic priorities for the next three years—priorities that will broadly support GSPL's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation—it is important to identify the specific actions we will undertake over this period:

- 1** Building organizational awareness of the impact of colonization on Indigenous peoples, the history and legacy of residential and day schools, and the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission by providing learning opportunities for GSPL's leadership and staff
- 2** Facilitating public awareness of Indigenous history and culture through partnerships between the GSPL and Indigenous educators
- 3** Conduct an organizational review using the Canadian Federation of Library Association's Truth and Reconciliation Report and Recommendations as a guideline to implement actions identified for the public library sector and to identify other opportunities to decolonize Library space
- 4** Prioritize engagement with local First Nations and Urban Indigenous communities in the spirit of building long-term, collaborative relationships

Background

Understanding a Growing City

Greater Sudbury is changing: our community is undergoing significant population growth, demographics are shifting, the local economy is strong, and employment rates remain competitive. Our City is growing and our community leaders have ambitious plans to extend this trend of ongoing and sustainable growth into the future. But we also face challenges: rising cost of living, growing inequality, slipping literacy and numeracy rates, and aging infrastructure—among other factors—present potential barriers to growth and community wellbeing.

Public libraries love a challenge. Libraries have evolved beyond a place to borrow books: public libraries in Ontario are mandated to understand and support the unique needs of their communities. Books remain an important part of GSPL's service but the scope of our service has grown to respond to a wide-range of challenges and opportunities. Literacy, social isolation, accessibility, mental health, the digital divide: GSPL is actively engaged with these complex challenges in collaboration with community leaders, partner organizations, and residents.



Long-Term Plan

Recognizing that Greater Sudbury is changing, GSPL recently completed a comprehensive planning process which resulted in GSPL's first ever Long-term Plan. Our long-term planning process began with listening to our community. We engaged with Library users and partners, community leaders, Library staff and Board members, and individual residents through surveys, in-person pop-ups, and focus groups. The Long-term Plan details what we heard. We also sourced a wide range of supporting data, from detailed neighbourhood profiles and current demographic data to benchmarking data which compares GSPL to peer library systems. We heard loud and clear that GSPL is a critical and well-used service for many in our community. Importantly, we also heard how we can better serve and support you.

The Long-term Plan identifies strategic objectives and goals for the Library which are expected to support the needs identified through community engagement. This 2026-2028 Strategic Plan builds upon the Long-term Plan's foundation, prioritizing the strategic objectives which will guide the Library's actions over the next three years. As such, this Strategic Plan is firmly rooted in our community: our plans and priorities are reflective of what we heard from you, the diverse challenges and opportunities you shared with us, the needs and aspirations which will support Greater Sudbury's continued growth and vibrancy.

Acknowledgements

Development of this 2026-2028 Strategic Plan and the recently completed Long-Term Plan has been possible only through the collaborative efforts of the many contributors to the planning process. We acknowledge those contributions and thank all who participated in this process for sharing your perspectives, expertise, and lived experience with us.

We would like to thank the many individual community members who took the time to share perspectives through surveys and in-person engagements. We would also like to thank those partners who contributed to interviews and focus groups for your candid and thoughtful contributions. The significant efforts of Library staff and Board members to both facilitate and contribute meaningfully to this process are also greatly appreciated.

Strategic Plan



Our Vision

A thriving and vibrant community empowered by universal access to information, where everyone has the opportunity to learn, to create, and to share.

Our Mission

We connect our community: igniting curiosity, creativity, and learning by providing free and equitable access to information, engaging experiences, and opportunities for collaboration.

Our Values

Intellectual Freedom: We believe that intellectual freedom is essential for a thriving democratic society. We provide, defend and promote equitable access to the widest possible variety of expressive content and resist calls for censorship and the adoption of systems that deny or restrict access to resources.

Literacy: We empower individuals to move forward on their unique intellectual journeys by advancing literacy in all its forms: from traditional print literacy and numeracy to media, financial, and digital literacy.

Creativity: We strive to inspire innovation and creativity by equipping our community with the resources, programs, and tools needed to discover new interests, develop skills, and nurture personal growth.

Access: We enhance access to services and resources which support the needs of our community by eliminating barriers, forging connections, and continuously identifying unmet needs.

Equity & Inclusion: We strive to create safe and welcoming spaces and services where all individuals feel included, recognized, and supported while also building strong relationships with equity-seeking communities to eliminate barriers and ensure equitable access.

Collaboration: We encourage connection and collaboration both within our organization and across the community, valuing teamwork and shared purpose to create more impactful outcomes for our community.

Integrity: We are fair and consistent, delivering on our promises, acknowledging our mistakes, and being transparent and accountable in our decisions and actions.

Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priority 1: Strengthen GSPL's Role as a Community Hub for Resources and Connections

GSPL provides equitable access to knowledge, technology, and services that support lifelong learning, digital inclusion, and social well-being. This priority reinforces the library's role as a trusted community connector, ensuring residents can access the resources and opportunities they need. By enhancing collections, digital services, and program offerings, GSPL will strengthen its position as a go-to destination for learning, civic engagement, and essential services.

This priority also emphasizes community-responsive programming and partnerships, ensuring GSPL remains adaptable to evolving local needs while fostering meaningful connections across Greater Sudbury.

What Success Looks Like:

- Enhancing equitable access to learning, technology, and essential services
- Delivering high-quality programming that drives system-wide and branch-specific engagement
- Fostering civic literacy and engagement across the community



Strategic Priority 2: Reimagine Library Spaces Through Human-Centered Planning



GSPL's physical and digital spaces must evolve to reflect the diverse needs of Greater Sudbury's communities. This priority focuses on creating welcoming, accessible, and adaptable spaces, optimizing branch placement, and integrating new service points to improve community access.

A key focus is balancing system-wide consistency with local flexibility – ensuring all branches offer high-quality experiences while reflecting their unique community identities. Beyond physical spaces, this priority also expands to alternative service models, and outreach efforts to bring GSPL services directly to residents where they live, work, and gather.

What Success Looks Like:

- Enhancing accessibility, flexibility, and community use in library facilities
- Optimizing access to GSPL through alternative spaces and service points
- Fostering a welcoming and inclusive patron experience across GSPL spaces

Strategic Priority 3: Amplify GSPL's Identity and Presence in Greater Sudbury



GSPL is an essential public service but many residents of Greater Sudbury are unaware of the full scope of GSPL's services and resources. This priority focuses on elevating awareness, outreach, and visibility to increase opportunities for library users and nonusers to recognize, engage with, and utilize the Library.

Through strategic marketing, cross-sector partnerships, and targeted outreach, GSPL will expand its reach to new users, strengthen relationships with the City of Greater Sudbury, and reinforce its role as a community hub. A focus on data-driven engagement will ensure that marketing and outreach efforts are impactful, measurable, and responsive to changing community needs.

What Success Looks Like:

- Increasing awareness of GSPL's wide-ranging value through a strong holistic brand
- Reinforcing the library's role as an essential municipal service that advances civic priorities
- Integrating marketing and outreach as a core library function
- Strengthening GSPL's outreach programming to engage non-users and underserved populations

Strategic Priority 4: Build GSPL's Capacity for Sustainable Growth and Lasting Impact



For GSPL to effectively serve Greater Sudbury we must have strong internal capacity, sustainable operations, and a strategic approach to resource allocation. This priority ensures that GSPL's governance and operations processes are designed to meet evolving demands while fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation. It addresses the underlying systems and capacity that support GSPL's long-term success, complementing the specific service improvements captured in the preceding priorities.

By implementing governance enhancements, staff development initiatives, strategic partnerships, and data-driven decision-making, GSPL will lay the foundation for long-term sustainability. These investments will ensure GSPL can scale its services, strengthen community connections, and remain a vital public resource well into the future.

What Success Looks Like:

- Building organizational capacity for strong leadership and service delivery
- Fostering strategic partnerships that contribute to sustainable service delivery and lasting community impact
- Ensuring scalable, data-driven growth and resource allocation

Conclusion

Moving Forward

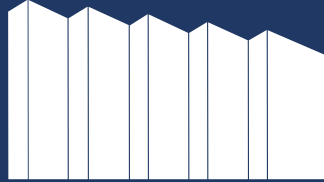
This 2026-2028 Strategic Plan for the Greater Sudbury Public Library is a commitment to you, our community. GSPL will continue to be the reliable, accessible, and helpful service you have come to count on. The strategic priorities and objectives outlined in this plan will help us exceed those expectations, delivering increasingly exceptional and innovative services to you. Through this plan we will strive to achieve our declared mission:

We connect our community: igniting curiosity, creativity, and learning by providing free and equitable access to information, engaging experiences, and opportunities for collaboration.

But to achieve this mission we need you. People are at the centre of the connections we make. Whether we're connecting people to information, or resources, or to each other: people are at the centre of all that we do. Connecting our community can only happen if we remain connected to you, and you help us connect to others. You are an integral part of this plan and we look forward to opportunities to connect with you.

Together we will continue to build a public library that supports our vision of a thriving and vibrant community empowered by universal access to information, where everyone has the opportunity to learn, to create, and to share.





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