



OUR WAY INTO THE FUTURE 2.0

**SUNDRIDGE-STRONG UNION
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**STRATEGIC PLAN
2018 – 2021**

*“The only thing
you absolutely
have to know is
the location of the
library”.*

Albert Einstein.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Before 1897, no public library existed. However, there was a reading room rented by the village for \$4.00 per month in the home of the local shoemaker. Here the villagers could read various newspapers, journals, and magazines.

A vote took place in the Orange Hall, January 5, 1897 and as a result, the electors of Sundridge gave their consent for the library to be established. As the years progressed the library became the Sundridge-Strong Union Public Library.

The resident population served by the library increased by 25% from 2,164 in 2007 to 2,704 in 2016. At the end of 2017, the library had an active membership of 638 individuals.

In order to meet ever-changing needs of the community, the library has endeavored to keep up with technological changes while continuing to provide access to the printed word and promote literacy in the community.

In 2013, the library board initiated the first strategic planning process to evaluate the community's needs, determine how best to serve community needs, and ensure the continued future success of the library. Throughout this process, the library board distributed community surveys of library users and non-users, as well as library board members, staff, and municipal staff and councillors.

The current strategic plan will be implemented in January 2018 and monitored regularly until December 2021. Progress toward achieving our goals will be reported monthly at board meetings. Achievement of our goals will be considered in creating a new strategic plan commencing in January 2022.

The result of this planning process has been to develop a strategic plan that guides "*Our Way Into the Future*".

LIBRARY VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

This strategic planning process was implemented to look at what we do well today. The mission statement defines its reason for existence and its unique contribution to the community. Our plan also looks at what we need to do in the future (vision).



*"When in doubt go to
the library."*

J.K. Rowling

“Libraries allow children to ask questions about the world and find the answers. And the wonderful thing is that once a child learns to use a library, the doors to learning are always open.”

Laura Bush

Our Mission Statement

To facilitate the democratic right of all individuals in our communities to have free and equitable access to information and collections, use of facilities, technology and expertise of friendly staff.

Our Vision Statement

To develop an accessible, informative social hub where community members are free to enhance their lives by imagining, learning and discovering.

Our Library Values

Our values guide the library’s operations, behaviours and decisions. The Sundridge-Strong Union Public Library’s values are:

- Equitable universal access
- Literacy and lifelong learning
- Intellectual freedom and protection of privacy
- Customer service
- Innovation and tradition
- Community focus
- Accountability, transparency, integrity and teamwork

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The library board has identified the following strategic priorities for the library. These priorities focus on key areas on which the library must focus its energy and resources to positively impact the lives of community members.

- To provide a library facility that meets the current and future needs of the community.
- To plan for complete accessibility.
- To provide programs and services that meet current and future community needs.
- To develop closer relationships with local schools and organizations.
- To develop a closer relationship with our indigenous people.
- To maintain and upgrade library technology and Internet presence.
- To plan for the current and future staffing needs of the library.
- To plan for increased public access to the library.



Current Library Services Offered

Services offered at the Sundridge-Strong Union Public Library are limited by its current location, staffing, and hours. The existing space consists of 1,000 square feet, which creates serious challenges in accessibility, offering programs, services and collections that meet the community needs.

Printed Material

The library had a collection of books and other print material of 12,637 in 2017 including novels, informational books, best sellers, encyclopedias, reference books, children's books and magazines.

Audio-Visual Materials

- Accessible talking books
- Books on CD, read-a-long kits, and Playaway audio books
- E-books available to loan
- Movies on DVD and Blu-ray
- Children's music on CD and DVD
- Wii games
- Children's educational computer
- Laptop, projector and screen available for loan
- E-resources
- Tablets
- Computers

Other Services

- Knowledgeable library staff
- Interlibrary loan – books are available to borrow from other libraries
- Online book catalogue – Access library collections over the internet and from home. Holds may be placed online.
- Pre-school story-hour, Lego nights, seasonal events, summer reading program and other programs and workshops
- Free internet access for the public
- WiFi – free wireless access in the library
- Computer instruction

Program attendance has shown a steady increase over the years.



“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.”

Dr. Seuss

“The only thing that you absolutely have to know, is the location of the library.”

Albert Einstein

CONNECT WITH THE COMMUNITY

Understanding community needs is one of the first steps in the process of strategic planning thus we have chosen to tabulate the community's strengths and weaknesses. We fully comprehend that as part of this process we needed to consult in various ways such as surveys and personal communication.

Community Strength and Opportunities:

1. Safe small town environment for families.
2. Caring Community.
3. Shared sense of history.
4. Support for the arts...we have a broad group of artisans in the area.
5. Beautiful area/shoreline.
6. Tourism.
7. Serviced by upscale businesses which draw people from neighbouring areas.
8. We have our schools.
9. An Eco center which is a draw for the area.
10. Our location within the province.
11. Active service groups.
12. A Splash pad.

Community Weaknesses and Challenges:

1. We have an aging population, older people are retiring here, while the younger people are leaving.
2. Businesses have divided into two separate identities, i.e. Main Street and Highway 124.
3. Room for industrial growth.
4. Not enough living wage jobs.
5. Proximity to North Bay and Huntsville is making us a bedroom community.
6. Lack of places to shop for clothes, furniture, etc.
7. Limited recreational activities for young and old; thus taking more money out of our area!
8. Lack of constructive youth activities i.e. Scouts, etc.
9. Lake Bernard's assets are not being utilized.
10. There appears to be a lack of unified vision for the area...townships, town, school, and library.
11. There is room for more collaboration between the school and library to share resources and develop programs.
12. Limited communication/collaboration with neighbouring libraries.



13. Difficult to get volunteer commitment. The same people volunteer for most events...getting tired out!
14. Due to being a bedroom community young people/parents do not appear to have a vested interest in their own community.
15. Local newspaper has a limited commitment to giving voice to our small community.
16. Financial instability in our area hampers the ability to increase public services.
17. There are limited opportunities for continuing education, i.e. night classes.
18. Highway eleven bypass
19. There is a need for seniors housing.



LIBRARY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Strengths

The library...

- acts as a focal point for knowledge and recreational reading.
- is centrally located in the village.
- staff are helpful, friendly and knowledgeable and create a positive image for the municipality in their dealings with residents.
- provides a good collection of traditional resources.
- system allows for the sharing of materials and resources within the province. This rotating of resources allows for a higher level of service and greater efficiency in the use of materials.
- has computer access, high speed and WiFi.
- provides some accessibility for people with exceptionalities.
- collaborates with neighbouring libraries (CALLE – Central Almaguin Lifelong Learning Experience).

Weaknesses

The library...

- realizes that some members of the community may have a traditional view of the library. This may frustrate attempts to adopt new or improved services.
- does not have a distinct image and a strong presence in the community where a solid foundation can be built upon in the future to provide improved and expanded services.
- lacks visibility and signage.
- does not have enough space.
- does not create a sense of place and attachment thus providing a focal point for social interaction due to a lack of space.

“If I was a book, I would like to be a library book, so I would be taken home by all different sorts of kids.”

Cornelia Funke

“This is one of the most friendly people oriented libraries I’ve been in. They remember faces, names and are always making suggestions for books, community happenings etc. My kids love coming in for visits and attending fun programs.”

- is seen as a soft or non-essential service. This may adversely affect financial support among taxpayers and Councillors who place a priority on hard services (i.e. roads).
- is not fully accessible.
- hours of operation are limited consequently the library may not be open at times that are convenient for users and this may limit use.

LIBRARY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The ability of the Sundridge-Strong Union Public Library to meeting the current and future reading and information needs of the community must consider both opportunities and challenges.

Opportunities

- Information is an increasingly important part of day-to-day living and increasingly critical to the economy. The library is in a position to respond to these increasingly important information requests.
- Our library can respond to needs that in other municipalities might be served at least in part by others, such as major bookstores or a university library.
- Given the role that the library can play in training the library has a unique role to play as the “net navigator” in helping residents to access and effectively use the internet.
- With the changes in technology, there is opportunity for the library to reassess its role and refine the services it will provide to the communities.
- The library could increasingly form effective partnerships with other information and services providers (i.e. tax clinics).
- Increased opportunities are ongoing to link the library to a growing and more sophisticated provincial library system.
- A stronger connection could be made between the library and its contribution to the economy; the library has the ability to enhance the broader municipal objectives such as economic development (CALLE, tax clinics).
- There is room for more programs to be offered to the public.
- The role as an internet provider at high speeds.



Challenges

- The library is affected by diminishing resources and increasing competition with other essential services for available government financial support.
- Some segments of the community may increasingly look to e-resources to meet their informational needs.
- To the extent that the library must compete with other information providers, library use and support may be adversely impacted. In both cases, this may place pressure on library funding.
- There is a lack of opportunity to relocate to a larger facility.
- There is a lack of young adult and young family patrons.
- There is a lack of opportunity to offer more programming, i.e. space and staff.
- There is a lack of reliable government funding.
- Lack of access to the additional space within the building.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Some goals have a specific target date while other goals will be on going.

Goal 1: To provide a library facility that meets the current and future needs of the community.

Target Date: 2021

1. *Evaluate current use of library space*
 - a. CEO to collect baseline measures of attendance at library programs, e.g., story times, book clubs, leisure reading.
 - b. CEO to collect baseline measures of computer usage and number of people waiting to use the computers at the library.
 - c. CEO to monitor requests for meeting space at the library.
2. *Investigate accessibility compliance in current facility*
 - a. CEO to review the AODA, Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Compliance Toolkit for Ontario Public Libraries, 2013 and prepare a report with recommendations to the board and council.
 - i. Target date: May 2020



“A library is not a luxury but one of the necessities of life.”

Henry Ward Beecher

“Sometimes the library seems small but it does provide a lot of services in a small space. The children’s section is great”.

3. *Investigate options for expanding the library space*
 - a. Establish a committee to investigate viable options for library expansion or re-location.
 - i. Target date: May 2020
 - b. To be kept informed on the reserve funds in working towards our goal of expansion or re-location.
 - c. The Library Board will establish a fundraising committee consisting of board members, community and summer residents.
 - i. Target date: May 2019

Goal 2: To build stronger relationships within the community and encourage greater participation in library activities and services

1. *Provide programs and services that meet current and future community needs*
 - a. Research innovative programs and services offered in other small, northern Ontario communities.
2. *Create a connection between the indigenous community and the library.*
 - a. Provide resources on indigenous culture and history.
 - b. Encourage indigenous individuals to share their culture and history.
3. *Encourage citizens to share their interests, knowledge and expertise through library programs*
 - a. Identify people and groups interested and willing to present sessions at the library.
 - b. Investigate programming partnerships with other community groups.
4. *Create and implement marketing strategies to increase the presence of the library within the community.*
 - a. Maintain and enhance a social media presence.
 - b. Increase print media advertising within the community.



Goal 3: To maintain and upgrade library technology and Internet presence.

1. Maintain a current public library website
 - a. CEO to ensure content is kept up-to-date
2. Maintain and update library technology
 - a. Work with OLS – North Technology team to ensure that our technology for the library is current.

Goal 4: To plan for the current and future staffing needs of the Library.

1. To ensure adequate staff are in the library to allow for staff preparation time to fulfill the governance, management, public service and technical demands of the library.
2. Continue to provide for the safety of staff according to health and safety legislation.
3. Encourage staff to participate in professional library development courses (such as a certificate program in managing a small public library).

Goal 5: Develop a plan to update the policy manual and familiarize the board to the policies.

Target date: January 2019

1. Create a committee to review and update the policies.
2. Create educational sessions at each board meeting to familiarize board members with the policy manual.

Our purpose for developing this strategic plan is to provide the Village of Sundridge, Strong Township, and Joly Township with excellent library services.



“Libraries store the energy that fuels the imagination. They open up windows to the world and inspire us to explore and achieve, and contribute to improving our quality of life. Libraries change lives for the better.”

Sidney Sheldon

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

Sundridge-Strong Union Public Library Board Members:

- Vi Montpetit
- Fraser Williamson

Sundridge-Strong Union Public Library:

- Melinda Kent – Librarian/CEO

With assistance from Ontario Library Service – North:

- Marjatta Asu

SUNDRIDGE-STRONG UNION PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEMBERS – UNTIL DECEMBER 2018

- Kelly Elik
- Barb Low
- Vi Montpetit
- Russell Becker
- Sarah Barnes
- Fraser Williamson

“When I got my library card, that’s when my life began.”

Rita Mae Brown



INTERNAL REPORTING (only for CEO and Board)

Monitoring and Updating the Plan

- Progress toward meeting goals described in this plan will be monitored at library board meetings.
- A report to the municipal councils and the community will be made available at regular intervals through Library Board meetings.
- Progress in achieving the goals will be assessed annually with a report posted to the library website.

Measures of Success

- Research completed
- Reports written and approved by the board
- Presentations before council
- Expanded programs and services
- Increased participation of community members
- Stronger relationships with schools and community groups
- Increased levels of user satisfaction
- An improved library facility that will satisfy accessibility laws

