



NIAGARA FALLS  
**PUBLIC  
LIBRARY**

**Strategic Plan  
2015-2019**

*A Great Library... Vital to a Great City.*

## Section I.

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The Niagara Falls Public Library's 2015-19 Strategic Plan sets out a clear and ambitious agenda to guide the Library's actions over the next four years. We have aligned our planning with the priorities of the City of Niagara Falls and fully commit to provide our community with the best possible services and resources to enhance the quality of life for all; and at the same time provide tangible, measurable outcomes.

We already have projects underway which are components of this Plan's key areas of focus and look forward to establishing and implementing additional new services and initiatives over the next four years. Key to this planning was the Staff reorganization which was implemented in 2015 following a formal consultant's review in 2014. The result is that we now have a staff structure in place to meet the needs of a 21st century library, and with the ability and skills to work for and with our customers in the digital age.

Before creating this plan, we needed to answer a number of questions:

- *What progress has been made – where are we today?*
- *How has the environment and the community changed since the 2011 - 14 Plan was approved?*
- *What are the emerging trends in library service?*
- *How can the library best focus its resources to meet changing community needs over the coming years?*

Staff began this process by doing extensive research in the following areas:

- Analysis of community profiles.
- Study of emerging trends and issues in library services.
- Review of comparative library statistics.
- Evaluation of technology trends and forecasts.

Through a series of Board and Staff meetings, community surveys, staff input, comments from our Community partners and hard data available to us, we have identified our areas of focus.

## Section II. Mission & Values

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### Mission

***To be a vital asset enhancing the quality of life in Niagara Falls.***

### Principles and Values

- We believe in intellectual freedom.
- We believe in access for all.
- We will treat everyone with courtesy and respect.
- We will be effective and efficient in all we do to provide a quality service in welcoming spaces.
- We will be innovative and nimble in our response to technology and the service and information needs of our community.
- We will work in partnership with other organizations to further the Library's mission.

### Niagara Falls Public Library Customer Promise

Niagara Falls Public Library enriches, inspires, empowers and links the community through our resources, services, outreach, and spaces. We proudly work to promote literacy, a lifelong love of learning, and a culture of reading, to enhance the quality of life in our community.

As our customer, you can expect Niagara Falls Public Library to:

- Deliver equal access to information and services tailored to meet your needs.
- Offer dynamic service by informed staff who take ownership of every customer interaction.
- Acknowledge and respond to your feedback.
- Have fair practices and procedures while ensuring accountability to the community.
- Provide welcoming spaces.

We are confident that you will work with us to ensure that all library customers share an outstanding experience. As a customer of Niagara Falls Public Library you will:

- Respect the rights of all library customers to share a common space.
- Ensure the care and safety of your children.
- Be courteous and respectful to others.
- Follow library practices and procedures.
- Treat library materials and resources with care.

We will work with you to provide an outstanding library experience.

## Section III. Objectives and Strategies

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### **CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE**

**Outcome: *An outstanding library experience.***

**Objective: Provide exceptional customer service.**

*Actions:*

- Continue to use the Customer Service Promise as the basis for planning and services.
- Revise current service delivery policies and procedures to become more customer-centered.
- Provide training programs to help staff improve their skills and develop new competencies to meet current and emerging service needs.

**Objective: Increase public awareness of library resources, services and programs and the role of the library in the community.**

*Actions:*

- Design and implement a marketing and communications plan.
- Engage with stakeholders by documenting and sharing NFPL's community impact.
- Develop and expand our Virtual Library.
- Create a Digital Exhibit Framework for Local History Resources.
- Strengthen the use of promotional tools used to highlight resources and collections.

**Objective: Curate, sustain and continuously assess library collections and resources.**

*Actions:*

- Implement a comprehensive collection management plan.
- Streamline access to resources and collections.
- Make popular items available quickly.
- Investigate new channels for delivering library collections and services.
- Develop culturally relevant collections and resources that support the programs and services offered by the Library.
- Promote the Library's collections, services and resources to build a stronger awareness of the library and to attract new customers.

**Objective: Ensure that all facilities are in line with service delivery needs and customer expectations.**

*Actions:*

- Redesign of Customer Service points.
- Refresh and improve furnishings and furniture.
- Explore potential changes to parking arrangements at the Chippawa Library.
- Explore vending machines and pickup lockers in community locations.
- Work to bring all facilities into compliance with City and Provincial AODA standards.

## **FOSTERING INNOVATION**

**Outcome:** *Vibrant, current, and valued resources and services that meet the changing needs of our communities.*

**Objective:** Improve customer convenience.

*Actions:*

- Identify opportunities for mobile delivery of services.
- Implement self-service options for customers.
- Explore reciprocal borrowing opportunities with other Niagara region libraries.

**Objective:** Promote and support digital and technological literacy in Niagara Falls.

*Actions:*

- Expand technology programming.
- Create a digital media / technology training lab to offer access to new technology.
- Provide comprehensive staff technology training to help staff improve their technology skills and knowledge.

**Objective:** Respond to customer needs and technology trends with innovative collections and resources.

*Actions:*

- Incorporate new technologies to support and enhance library collections and encourage digital literacy.
- Expedite access to relevant technologies, training, programs, and equipment.
- Utilize Mobile apps to enhance access to resources and services (2016)
- Embrace creative technologies.
- Understand and proactively address the unique needs of underserved populations so that the strength of the library's collections can be realized.

**Objective:** Develop a comprehensive Library Space Plan.

*Actions:*

- Convert the Sir Harry Oakes Room into a digital media / technology training lab.
- Identify underused or unused spaces and repurpose, in line with service priorities.
- Begin initial planning for action regarding the Chippawa Library (2019 and beyond).

**Objective:** Maintain and improve Technology infrastructure.

*Actions:*

- Continuously review equipment and services to ensure that the technology used to deliver Library services is cost-effective and up-to-date.
- Plan for provision of new service delivery channels.
- Maintain and expand the provision of free, open Internet Access to customers.

**Objective: Board development.**

*Actions:*

- Support and enhance regular Board member training.
- Ensure that Board membership reflects the community.
- Annual assessment and review of the Strategic Plan by the Board.

## **COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT**

**Outcome: *Responsive and dynamic programming and outreach, resources, services, and spaces based on deep understanding of community needs and aspirations.***

**Objective: Seek community input to improve current services.**

*Actions:*

- Develop survey to determine the needs of library users and non-users.
- Create new communications channels for customers to provide feedback about services.

**Objective: Provide innovative programming and outreach services to foster knowledge creation and support literacy in our community.**

*Actions:*

- Review Library processes to maximize resources for programming and outreach initiatives.
- Expand outreach efforts in the community through mobile delivery of services.
- Enhance the Visiting Library Service.
- Develop programming and outreach for underserved populations.

**Objectives: Strengthen, celebrate and share our unique local history collection.**

*Actions:*

- Create a Digital Exhibit Framework for Local History Resources.
- Interpret the Local History Collections.
- Process donations in a timely fashion.
- Expand and enhance the Historic Niagara Digital Collections.
- Deepen the relationships between the Niagara Falls Public Library and other historical and heritage groups in the area.
- Develop and promote an app for historical walking tours of Niagara Falls.

**Objective: Relocation and expansion of Stamford Centre Library (2016).**

*Actions:*

- Request that funding for Library facilities is included in the City's Capital Budget Plan.
- Conduct the necessary engineering feasibility study for the proposed new Stamford Centre Library location.

**Objective: Re-invigorate the relationship between the Library Board and Councillors, enabling a better understanding of the services offered to constituents and how the library supports the City brand.**

*Actions:*

- Board presentation to Council at least twice a year.
- Invite Councillors to visit the library for 1:1 orientation with Library staff.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS**

**Outcome:**

***Safe, modern, accessible, and welcoming spaces with transparency and accountability.***

**Objective: Ensure equitable access to library facilities, resources and services.**

*Actions:*

- Work to bring all facilities into compliance with City and Provincial AODA standards.
- Continue to build accessible collections, services and programs to meet AODA-legislated requirements.

**Objective: Deepen our understanding of our community and its needs and aspirations.**

*Actions:*

- Develop a community assessment framework to understand and respond to service gaps.
- Connect with community groups and develop relevant partnerships with organizations.
- Partner with City departments where possible, maximizing resources.

**Objective: Manage and maintain facilities in an efficient, cost effective manner.**

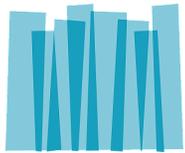
*Actions:*

- Replace the Victoria Avenue HVAC system.
- Continue to identify and implement energy and operating efficiencies.
- Explore grants and other funding available from all levels of government.

**Objective: Sustain our funding base by continuing to demonstrate sound financial management and return on investment (ROI).**

*Actions:*

- Promote and foster a strong relationship with City Council to ensure continued support.
- Create a better understanding (MOU) with City staff about services shared and work together to be more efficient (avoid duplication of effort and services).
- Communicate with Provincial and Federal Representatives.



## Strategic Direction

**CUSTOMER SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE**

**FOSTERING  
INNOVATION**

**COMMUNITY  
ENRICHMENT**

**ORGANIZATIONAL  
EFFICIENCY AND  
EFFECTIVENESS**

## Objectives

- Provide exceptional customer service
- Increase public awareness of library resources, services and programs and the role of the library in the community
- Curate, sustain and continuously assess library collections and resources
- Ensure that all facilities are in line with service delivery needs and customer expectations

- Improve customer convenience
- Promote and support digital and technological literacy in Niagara Falls
- Respond to customer needs and technology trends with innovative collections and resources
- Develop a comprehensive Library Space Plan
- Maintain and improve Technology infrastructure
- Board development

- Seek community input to improve current services
- Provide innovative programming and outreach services to support knowledge creation and literacy
- Strengthen, celebrate and share our unique local history collection
- Relocation & expansion of Stamford Centre Library (2016)
- Re-invigorate the relationship between the Library Board & Council
- Support the City brand

- Ensure equitable access to library facilities, resources and services
- Deepen our understanding of our community and its needs and aspirations
- Manage and maintain facilities in an efficient, cost effective manner
- Sustain our funding base by continuing to demonstrate sound financial management and ROI

## Outcomes

**AN OUTSTANDING  
LIBRARY EXPERIENCE**

**VIBRANT, CURRENT, AND  
VALUED RESOURCES AND  
SERVICES THAT MEET THE  
CHANGING NEEDS OF OUR  
COMMUNITIES**

**RESPONSIVE AND DYNAMIC  
PROGRAMMING AND OUTREACH,  
RESOURCES, SERVICES, AND  
SPACES BASED ON DEEP  
UNDERSTANDING OF COMMUNITY  
NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS**

**SAFE, MODERN,  
ACCESSIBLE, AND  
WELCOMING SPACES  
WITH TRANSPARENCY  
AND ACCOUNTABILITY**