



NIAGARA FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2023



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It was important that the Strategic Plan and the data collection process be one that engaged the community and solicited input from as many stakeholder groups as possible. Stakeholders were tasked with identifying what they use and need from the library, the role they would like it to play in the Niagara Falls community, and to determine what programs and services should be focused on over the next five-year period.

The size and cultural makeup of the Niagara Falls community has changed over the past several years. The natural and historical significance of Niagara Falls powers a strong interest in preserving the City's history as residents look to the future. A sizable and growing Local History Department at the library now houses collections that document the growth and contributions of the City of Niagara Falls to the region and world, a source of pride for the community.

As the library delivers both virtual and real collections, programs, services and technologies need to adapt and change as we move forward to meet the needs of residents with the resources available.

All of these considerations played an important role in developing a plan for the future. The Strategic Plan lays out ten main areas of focus for the library over the next five years. These include being a central location for access to community resources, keeping up with information technology, digital literacy, access to physical and virtual collections, educational and informational programming

for all ages, well-trained staff to assist patrons, innovative ways to share what is available at the library with the community, preservation of local history, a strong online web presence and new considerations for the library's sustainability.

Goals, objectives and action items for the focus areas have been identified for this journey. The next step is to share the plan with stakeholders. Our staff will then engage in developing innovative plans to meet our goals. In doing so, we will fulfill our mission to strengthen the community by providing what they need to explore possibilities at the Niagara Falls Public Library.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the following people for their contribution to the Niagara Falls Public Library and preparation of this strategic plan:

Niagara Falls Public Library Board of Trustees

Mr. Carmen Grant, President
Ms. Danielle Zona, Vice President
Ms. Noreen Hill, Treasurer
Mr. Don King, Secretary
Ms. Lynne M. Neveu, Trustee
Dr. Mukhles U. Rahman, PhD, Trustee

Strategic Plan Advisory Committee

Focus Group Members

Library Patrons

Friends of the Library

Citizens of Niagara Falls

City of Niagara Falls Government



NIAGARA FALLS
PUBLIC LIBRARY

Executive Summary

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Organization
- 1.2 Objectives of the Strategic Planning Process
- 1.3 Stakeholders

2. Profile

- 2.1 Mission
- 2.2 Vision
- 2.3 Values
- 2.4 Current Challenges
- 2.5 Approach

3. Methodology

- 3.1 Advisory Committee
- 3.2 Review Process
- 3.3 SWOT Analysis
- 3.4 Focus Groups
- 3.5 Survey Instruments

4. Data Gathering

- 4.1 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
- 4.2 Survey Results Regarding Library's Future Focus

5. Strategic Approach – Goals, Objectives, Actions

- 5.1 Community Resource Center
- 5.2 Improve Marketing of Library
- 5.3 Website Development
- 5.4 Options for Funding Sources
- 5.5 Lifelong Learning Initiatives
- 5.6 Technology & Digital Literacy
- 5.7 Support for Local History Department
- 5.8 Building Efficiency, Security, Signage
- 5.9 Community Relations and Outreach
- 5.10 Staff Development

6. Additional Data

- Summary of Community Survey Results – available upon request
- Summary of SWOT Session Findings – available upon request

1.1 Organization

Library services in Niagara Falls, New York began in 1814 with a library housed in a number of locations in the city including the Third Street School, the Frontier Mart, the Arcade Building, the Carnegie Library on Main Street as well as the library's current location in the Earl W. Brydges Building on Main Street. The LaSalle Library site on Buffalo Avenue was built in 1927 and originally housed the library, a post office and a police department before it became a branch of the Niagara Falls Public Library. The library's two locations continue to be dynamic providers of essential programs and services to the Niagara Falls community.

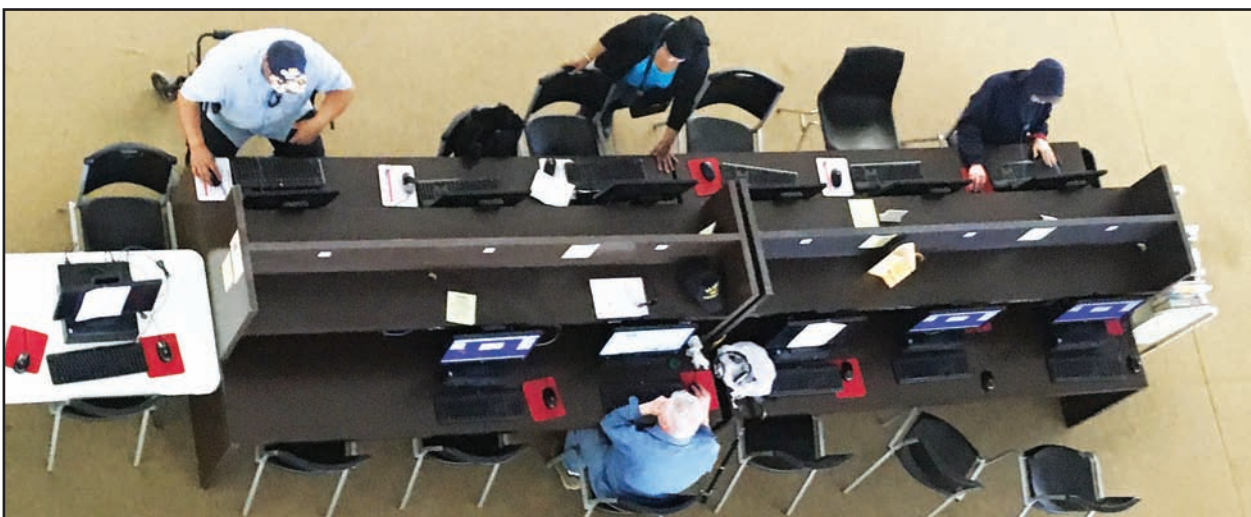
1.2 Objectives of the strategic planning process

The objectives of the strategic planning process were to:

- Involve the community in the planning process for the future of the library
- Prioritize the materials, programs and services needed by the community
- Identify challenges at both library locations
- Identify solutions to challenges incorporating community input
- Develop a plan to address challenges with measurable actions / key indicators
- Share the final Strategic Plan with stakeholders

1.3 Stakeholders

The key stakeholders involved are the residents of Niagara Falls, New York and surrounding area, town and municipal governments, library staff, library Board of Trustees, Friends of the Library Group, and Niagara County resident and libraries accessing its services as the Central Library in the Nioga Library System.



2.1 Mission

The Mission of the Niagara Falls Library is:

to strengthen our community through lifelong learning with access to varied collections, programs, and assistance with digital literacy.

2.2 Vision

The Vision of the Niagara Falls Library is:

to be a strong community resource for residents to explore possibilities so that they can reach their full potential.

2.3 Values

The core values of the Niagara Falls Public Library are to provide:

- Strong educational and informational community programs, services, and resources
- A community gathering place that embraces diversity and accessibility
- A welcoming and secure environment
- An important role in preserving and celebrating our local history

2.4 Current Challenges

Municipal budget cuts in the amount of \$92,000 which triggered a \$120,000 loss of state funding have impacted the library's budget. It was necessary to cut two staff positions and most recently, reduce operating hours at the LaSalle Branch. As such, the Niagara Falls Public Library's programs and services are more important than ever in meeting the educational and informational needs of the community.

2.5 Plan Approach

The Board of Trustees and Executive Director share information regarding the library's programs, services and challenges with the municipal representatives, and hold monthly meetings with the City's Mayor. All parties recognized the importance of community input in planning for the future of the library and in the preparation of this Strategic Plan.

3.1 Advisory Committee

A 7-person Advisory Committee consisting of staff, trustees, patrons and members of the Friends of the Library group met in-person to provide input on the results of the SWOT Analysis sessions, Focus Groups Findings, development of the Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Core Values. The Advisory Committee also had the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed survey questions and drafts of the Strategic Plan via email.

3.2 Review Process

The Board of Trustees, Executive Director and Advisory Committee reviewed the various processes by which data was collected and the results throughout the development of the Strategic Plan. These parties also had the opportunity to review and comment on the drafts of the plan prior to its final publication.

3.3 SWOT Analysis

Two SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis sessions took place in mid-November 2017. Some staff, patrons and members of the Friends of the Library attended either one of the two meetings. At these meetings, participants identified and prioritized items in each of the SWOT categories. The top responses in each category are included in this document.



3.4 Focus Groups

Niagara Falls residents were invited to attend either of two Focus Group Meetings that were held in February 2018: one meeting at the Main Street location and one meeting at the LaSalle Branch. Invitations to attend the meetings were advertised on Facebook, on flyers and on handouts at each library. Some invitations were distributed in-person at each library as patrons entered the building on various days prior to the meeting dates. They were also emailed to members of the Friends of the Library and to patrons that had provided an email address. In addition to the Focus Group meetings, individual interviews with patrons unable to attend the scheduled meetings were also conducted. The Focus Groups critiqued the SWOT findings, reviewed the draft Mission and Vision Statements, and provided initial input for survey questions and topics.



3.5 Survey Instruments

Surveys were conducted in March and April of 2018. Four survey versions were administered to collect input from library users, non-users and library staff. A Community Survey was available online and on paper at the libraries, in-person surveys were solicited at locations in Niagara Falls and an online staff survey was also administered. The online Community Survey was advertised in the Niagara Gazette, with local schools using Peachjar.com, using targeted ads on Facebook, with announcements on both the library's website and Facebook pages, on the City of Niagara Falls' website, on posters at both libraries and various public buildings, and via email invitation. A summary of results from the more than 300 respondents is included in this document.

DATA GATHERING

3.5 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

The library's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were identified and prioritized. The top five in each category are noted below: (In some instances, the group ranked multiple items with the same priority during voting.)

<u>STRENGTHS</u>	<u>WEAKNESSES</u>
Staff are helpful, technologically aware	Staffing / budget constraints
Programs & classes (i.e. SCORE/YOGA)	Theft & loitering / security, safety /location
Collection of books/DVDs are good	Outdated building needs repairs/updates
Free WiFi, computers, fax, software, printing	Website isn't mobile friendly
Local history department Central Library designation strong citizen patron support good librarians in multiple departments equal access for all	Poor communication with branches, local politicians IT issues Poor building access Local History Collection needs attention Disjointed look to materials
<u>OPPORTUNITIES</u>	<u>THREATS</u>
Invite VIP/Politician to events to speak	Losing circulation, losing population
Outreach - Local History digital collection	City's decision to reduce library funding
Use Facebook feed & calendar on website	Bad economy - no jobs
More support from Friends of Library Group	Non-patrons use facilities for non-library (i.e. homeless using bathrooms)
Outreach directly to students during class time Grow volunteers Library newsletter/e-newsletter/begin patron email collection	Loss of funding - budget cuts



4.2 Survey Results Regarding the Library's Focus for the Future

All surveys were reviewed by the Advisory Committee prior to administration. Answers to the survey questions were tabulated and ranked for each of the survey instruments. A summary of the top findings is presented below. Complete surveys with questions, answers and comments for all surveys are available upon request.

Community Survey

Residents were asked to rate their interest in a number of topics that could be focused on over the next five years at the library. These topics were taken from data collected from the SWOT and Focus Group sessions. The survey was presented online and in a paper format. The top answers regarding what residents thought the library's focus should be over the next 5 years are listed below:

1. Being a central location for community information
2. Lifelong learning
3. More active marketing of the library and all it has to offer
4. Growing financial security/funding stability
5. Programs for youth, job seekers, STEM, wellness, & Local History Department

When asked to comment on which of the items the residents themselves were most interested in, the top 10 answers fell in the following categories:

1. Local History Department
2. Health, Wellness, Yoga, Nutrition programs
3. Education, lifelong learning
4. Marketing of the library
5. STEM programs
6. Job search, youth and low-income programs/services
7. Digital literacy and computers
8. Central place for community resources
9. Quiet reading area
10. Collaboration with local business and colleges

In-person Survey

Responses to a brief in-person survey that was about how the library could be improved were tabulated and ranked. Responses are noted below:

1. Refurbishing, building and maintenance improvements
2. Grow quality collections

3. Longer hours – especially requested were evenings and Sundays
4. Improve security
5. Increase sustainability/funding

The top answers to the role the library plays in the community and its value were:

1. Collections
2. A quiet place to read and study
3. Children’s programs
4. Educational role
5. Computers and Internet access

Staff Survey

The staff’s top ranking of the presented topics regarding what the library should focus on over the next 5 years were tabulated and appear below:

1. Funding and sustainability
2. Digital literacy
3. Cultural programming
4. Local History Department
5. Children/ STEM/Youth/Job Seekers

When asked to comment on which of the items staff thought should be addressed in the next five years the top answers fell in the following categories:

1. Funding and sustainability
2. Safety and security
3. Marketing of the library
4. Technology – programs and equipment
5. Building updates and maintenance



GOALS, OBJECTIVES, ACTIONS

Within five years the Niagara Falls Public Library aims to achieve these goals and objectives and complete the following actions:

I. Goal - Grow as a central location for library resources

A. Objective - collaboration with local agencies and organizations to share what they have to offer

1. Action - continue to host monthly Community Resource “Drop-in Days” with representatives of local services agencies at the library adding two additional agency/topics with the focus on health/wellness.

2. Action - update and add to collection of materials from local service agencies for display on rack stand in prominent area.

B. Objective - promote career planning and share resources to find and apply for jobs

1. Action - hold workshop(s) to explain and demonstrate how to use new feature on Facebook to find and apply for local jobs. Information is at <http://time.com/money/4674436/facebook-new-jobs/>. Option to schedule individual appointments for assistance could be considered.

2. Action – explore partnership with Trott Access Center to host “Explore the Possibilities” series for assistance with job search and job application skills at hands-on sessions.

3. Action – explore career planning services available through Ferguson’s Career Guidance Center. Place link to service on website. Offer workshop(s) to teens and young adults to explain and demonstrate use this service. Info about this career assessment and resume building resource is at <http://bit.ly/2HQmDlo>.

II. Goal - To improve marketing and communication with media and stakeholders

A. Objective - branding of the library

1. Action – create an overall marketing plan for the library with assistance from marketing professionals that will focus on how patrons can “explore the possibilities”.

2. Action - distribute high resolution logo digitally with and without tagline to staff for use on all materials.

3. Action - create and use template with uniform look (colors and fonts) web address for all flyers and promotional materials.

4. Action – collaborate with both branches to articulate your message – “exploring the possibilities” - use on all materials.

5. Action – create a library brochure around tagline “explore the possibilities” using a passport theme. Services, collections and programs can be arranged like areas for countries visited. During tours you can stamp them as patrons go through areas. (Include LaSalle – for those interested in longer trips) Use for all tours, distribute to politicians, tourism outlets, hotels, welcome wagon piece for new patrons, at off-site events, etc.

6. Action – seek grant funding for marketing the library using suggested ALA sources at <http://www.ala.org/tools/research/larks/grants>

The Niagara Falls Public Library has a significant number of quality collections, programs, services and outreach efforts currently in use to serve the community and inform them of all that library has to offer. The Goals, Objectives and Actions identified by stakeholders during the data collection process and presented in the Strategic Plan will complement and enhance these ongoing efforts.

B. Objective - social media branding consideration

1. Action – create/use a complimentary logo for the LaSalle and Local History Departments and use on their Facebook pages.
2. Action – name LaSalle Facebook page “LaSalle Branch of the Niagara Falls Public Library”.

C. Objective - newsletter and electronic newsletter

1. Action – continue to issue print copy of newsletter quarterly. Increase to bi-monthly when feasible.
2. Action – collect email addresses online and at the circulation desks at both libraries for use in sending brief email newsletter.
3. Action – distribute one page e-newsletter with new arrivals, news, upcoming programs via email list monthly.

D. Objective - increase presence and engagement on social media

1. Action - set up ability to multi-media post and schedule posts to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest at one time from one application such as Hoot Suite or Later.com.
2. Action - post routinely with the goal of 4-5 posts per week following the 70-20-10 rule for post content. Use images for nearly every post. Possible topics - see suggestions at <http://bit.ly/2joaQQr>
3. Action – increase engagement on your accounts by liking, replying and or commenting on any type of responses within 24 hours.
4. Action – cross post sharing of Local History’s and LaSalle Branch of the Niagara Falls Public Library Facebook posts on main library’s Facebook page.

E. Objective - increase sharing of library news in the media

1. Action – ask Niagara Gazette if they are willing to host a monthly column featuring what is new at the library. Plan 12 topics for articles in advance to cover variety of topics, change as necessary.
2. Action – explore cost of an insert and/or advertising in the Gazette that could be used to announce new programs/major announcements at least twice a year to announce summer and spring programs.
3. Action – submit program announcements for showing on Spectrum cable TV’s Community Billboard.
4. Action – ask Town (and City) to include brief article about the library in their newsletters/mailings to residents.

F. Objective - increase sharing of news at the library

1. Action – prepare daily brief mention of upcoming programs the next day (or that week) to be read during closing time announcement.
2. Action – use this same mention for staff to say to people when they check materials out.

III. Goal - To update the library's website presence and increase engagement

A. Objective - determine and implement website improvements

1. Action – identify professional web design company to create a website that provide patrons easy access to all the library has to offer and allows for staff updates.

Some considerations – improve navigation adding calendar and electronic services to navigation bar. Add search feature, contact form, page for LaSalle, education page, about page, Job Search page, detail on donations page to establish need. Use more images on overall site (use people in the images if possible). Include Facebook feed (with actual news items visible) on homepage, Facebook news feeds on Local History and LaSalle pages. In addition:

- *On about page – use library history (both libraries), add some facts, high resolution logo for download, recent press articles, awards, recognition and contact form or contact email.*
- *On education page – feature upcoming programs in visible place. Sections on page for children, teens, adults, and describe what's available for these groups.*

2. Action – make website responsive / mobile friendly

IV. Goal - To increase opportunities for residents to provide monetary support for the library

A. Objective - encourage giving on social media and on library's website

1. Action - create an overall fundraising plan that identifies goals. Include specific benchmarks to track progress.

2. Action – establish a PayPal Donate or Network for Good account for the library and place a “Donate Now” button on website homepage.

3. Action – identify a specific improvement or acquisition and create a giving campaign. Make this a very attainable goal so campaign will be successful (color printer mentioned various times in surveys). Consider using a portion of a monetary gift already given to assure campaign success. Publicize success and then repeat process increasing amount for next campaign as appropriate. Market with the “need” for the item in mind.

4. Action – set up and promote “Giving Tuesday” that takes place Tuesday after Thanksgiving. Use social media to set stage before event and during. Tool kit for nonprofits is at <http://bit.ly/2weRJSq>.

5. Action – occasional use of the library's email list to send fundraising emails and ask for referrals as well as donations. Use “Donate Now” button in the email requests.

B. Objective - encourage giving from patrons and patron groups

1. Action – explore option of using Facebook's Charitable Giving Tools for nonprofits at <https://donations.fb.com/>.

2. Action – identify and get quote for a capital improvement project (electronic Main Street sign or bathroom updates). Share the need with local businesses, organizations, patrons, etc. with photos of the before and drawings of the after. Cost out targeted mailing and other advertising for campaign to appropriate audiences.

3. Action – hold Book Sale at Christmas time that features books, DVDs, CDs in excellent condition.

4. Action – explore viability of opening a Shopify website for purchase of books online. Shopify offers simple transaction processing, printed shipping labels, easy web store setup.

5. Action – subcommittee of Board of Trustees explore starting a Foundation to assist with fundraising. (see ALA article on Starting a Foundation at <http://bit.ly/2w5RgBP>).

C. Objective - encourage targeted giving to Local History Department

1. Action – add a “Donate Now” button to Local History Department’s own webpage with specific need – to help preserve (name specific need). Use photos. Announce updates on progress.

2. Action – develop and offer tiered membership campaign with different donation amounts (\$25, \$50, \$100, \$500+) on Local History Department’s webpage. Brand the memberships with clever history-related names at each level.

3. Action – Contact Nik Walenda through his Never Give Up website. Ask if he will be a spokesperson/sponsor for a fundraising campaign for the Local History Department. Target for fundraiser is the preservation of feats of daring over the falls collection OR preparation of a tourism brochure about parts of the collection regarding people tight-rope walking over the falls and his wife’s falls feat.

4. Action – explore/investigate grants available from NYS tourism or historical groups.

V. Goal - To provide lifelong learning opportunities for residents of all ages

A. Objective - learning with information sharing on health, wellness and cultural topics

1. Action - identify 4 topics and ask community experts from local businesses, colleges/universities/high schools to present workshops in this program. (Recruit retired staff who are well-liked, well-known.)

2. Action – create an outreach effort/marketing campaign for offerings for the 4 additional health and wellness classes covering topics of nutrition, health, exercise, the arts, etc. for branding purposes that includes social media, press releases, website announcements and targeted advertising on Facebook.

B. Objective - increase outreach and promote literacy and life skills services for current and new programs.

1. Action – create an outreach effort/marketing campaign to connect patrons/residents with literacy services currently available at the library that includes social media, press releases, website announcements and advertising.

2. Action - partner with local colleges and universities to provide 2 additional classes/instruction on topics of interest to adults on survey: budgeting, finance, and living well on a limited income.

3. Action – partner with local colleges and universities to provide student tutors or a series of mini classes for teens on how to study, how to take notes, and/or test taking skills.

4. Action – plan posts and articles about Three B’s program to include periodic mention in newsletter, email, website, social media, etc.

C. Objective - to increase patron understanding and ease of use for library catalog

1. Action – conduct a “how to use the catalog” sessions on routine basis.
2. Action – create a written set of directions for how to use the catalog and post and have a supply of copies to take.

D. Objective - explore options to better inform parents of school-aged children about programs and services available

1. Action – explore the cost of mailing non-profit mailing to residents of school-aged children at beginning of each school year.
2. Action - explore the cost of including a piece or an article in the school’s mailing before annual budget vote (April). See if the District will allow an article (or even a note about your website and URL) to be included at no cost.
3. Action – host a children’s art contest for a design that best portrays “explore the possibilities”. Use on library’s webpage for Children’s Services, flyers, other promotional materials for that year.

VI. Goal - Increase awareness and use of library’s electronic services

A. Objective - to promote use of the electronic services available through the library

1. Action – include logo with link for eservices on website homepage. Add more description of each service on webpage. Add link to a “how to” page for use of Hoopla, RBdigital, OverDrive.
2. Action – focus on promotion of one digital service at a time. Host hands-on session(s) for each of the digital services. Feature that service and your session(s) for a month-long period at the library, email newsletter, newspaper column, and social media. Put printed promotional material about that service into materials at check-out. Rotate through the services once each on annual basis.

B. Objective - to increase use electronic services available through the library

1. Action – develop and/or make available online and printed guides and instructional tools for the electronic services listed above. Place guides near computer stations, at checkout, card racks.
2. Action - include one selection from Hoopla, RBdigital, OverDrive in announcements of new arrivals in newsletter, enews.
3. Action – use Facebook targeted advertising to reach Niagara Falls residents with ads about specific books, music, ebooks, etc. that are available as the services are promoted.

VII. Goal - Grow and strengthen the Local History Department

A. Objective - increase awareness of what is available and grow supporters

1. Action – feature Local History Department more prominently on website by adding more to their page with photos, lists of more notice of digitized collections, artifacts, etc.

2. Action - add Facebook feed and information about Friends of the Local History Department to their page.

3. Action – post 3-4 times per week on Facebook page using lots of photos and trivia about item(s) or articles to garner interest.

4. Action – host annual walk through history tour of the Department highlighting artifacts collection. Offer refreshments in meeting room after. Offer to have selfie taken with life-sized Annie Edson Taylor in promotion of event.

B. Objective - increase exposure and awareness about the library for visitors to Niagara County

1. Action – ask NiagaraCounty.com, NiagaraFallsUSA.com’s “About Niagara Falls” section, Niagara County Historical Society, Niagara Falls Local History Department on New York State Tourism website under Local Resources at this page <https://www.ny.gov/local> to add link to Local History Department’s webpage (when completed) to their websites

2. Action – explore cost to prepare color tri-panel brochure about Local History Department. Feature photos of artifacts, most popular collections, hours, contact information.

3. Action - If/when printed, distribute at hotels, Visitor Center, tourism locations, at presentations, etc. Visit or send replacement materials periodically to restock tourism card racks.

C. Objective - expand the community’s role in preserving the Local History Department by archiving local photos and memories

1. Action – develop a program for residents to add their family history and photos to the collection using the scanner and recording oral histories - a “Legacy Lab”. Roll out new program using all media outlets/channels.

2. Action – offer training sessions to demonstrate “how to” sessions to scan photos and record audio. After training, residents can schedule an appointment to record their memories.

3. Action – calls for collections can be made focusing on local events, celebrations, historical buildings, famous visitors to the falls, architecture, etc. Share topics of collections as they grow in newsletter and on website.

VIII. Goal - Explore and address updates to building including reading room, signage, security, bathrooms and parking lot lighting

A. Objective - explore viability of additional quiet reading room space at Main Street location

1. Action – identify options for a community room reading area – location, furniture, coffee maker, signage for use of intended use of room (ie. no sleeping), determine hours, rules, collections and/or displays to house inside.

B. Objective - provide more visibility for security that is onsite.

1. Action – ask security for continuity in wearing (or provide) T-shirts / sweaters that clearly say SECURITY at all times.

2. Action – investigate cost and viability for security for additional or during all hours library is open.

3. Action – position security personnel at more central (very visible upon entry) location between two entrances.

4. Action - label Security desk/area with large SECURITY sign in front.

C. Objective - provide increase safety awareness and improvements

1. Action - working with NFPD or NC Sheriff Department, develop plan of action for different crisis scenarios at both library locations. Have staff attend sessions.

2. Action – investigate cost for installation of video cameras and for Local History Department with monitors to be connected and visible to Security at their station. Alternative – a panic button.

3. Action – explore cost and feasibility for installation of new lighting in parking lot at Main St. and LaSalle. Explore possible grant funding.

D. Objective - upgrades to bathrooms, building and ADA compliance

1. Action – explore cost and feasibility of updating the first-floor bathroom at Main St. and at LaSalle.

2. Action – prioritize list of what needs / can afford to be done in bathrooms to begin to comply with Americans With Disability Act and to satisfy legal requirements.

3. Action – prepare a Capital Plan with a prioritized list for building upgrades and repairs.

E. Objective - signage for entrances and promotion

1. Action – investigate cost for signs for Main Street library entrances and lighted electronic sign out front of the Main Street building to promote upcoming programs and services 24/7.

IX. Goal - Boost community relations efforts in and around the community

A. Objective - increase efforts to education, inform and engage the community about the good things happening and available at the Niagara Falls Public Library

1. Action – share pertinent results of the Community Survey with patrons/residents on website and newsletter issue.

2. Action – hold one or two annual community “Ask the Director” nights at the LaSalle Branch to discuss concerns, challenges, ask for input, assure residents. Share questions and responses in newsletter(s).

3. Action – share on social media the large number of organizations that use your meeting rooms. Use photos if possible.

4. Action – identify needs of community/patrons with annual short survey, town hall meeting or question on social media. Share results.

B. Objective - support and build membership for Friends of the Library (FOL)

1. Action - address one criticism identified on one of the surveys in the print version of the newsletter in article co-authored by FOL member.

2. Action – include FOL how to join information on newsletter.

3. Action – ask the FOL to have a “Friends of Friends” scholarship program for fine forgiveness for the adults.

C. Objective - keeping local and state government informed about the library, its usage and value to the community

1. Action – share Strategic Plan and highlights of Survey Results with City, County and Town governments. Include a handwritten note on the cover of the copies from Executive Director.

2. Action - ask City of Niagara Falls and Town of Niagara to add a link to the library on their website – you can add theirs to your site as well

3. Action – mail newsletters to individual members of the City Council, Niagara County Legislators, and Town of Niagara Board.

D. Objective - reaching out to the community

1. Action - ask City of Niagara Falls and Town of Niagara to add a link to the library on their website – reciprocate with their links on library’s site.

2. Action – set up (and brand) a community-wide reading experience/program. Options: Partner with the Niagara Falls Canada Public Library for a across the borders program or pick a book with a local history topic to tie in Local History Department with selection. Determine if there is a local author to participate. Ask Tops, Niagara University, NCCC, City of Niagara Falls, Pine Ave. Business Association, etc. to be co-sponsors. Make this an annual event. Guidebook available from ALA at <http://bit.ly/2KoJ8PJ>. Make an annual event.

3. Action – host annual outdoor reading festival using the space in front of the Earl. W. Brydges library that has a park-like setting. Light refreshments available, possibly use entertainment by local musicians, FOL assist and have books for sale or to give away to the children, have join FOL forms available at event.

E. Objective - addressing community concerns and building relationships

1. Action – hold a “fine forgiveness” weekend for patrons. They can sign up to have fines on a agreed upon amount removed on an annual basis.

2. Action – consider if feasible or possible to offer longer hours one night a week or possibility of Sunday hours.

3. Action – prepare and distribute an Annual Report to local government officials, FOL, and post online. Salient facts can be used in newsletters, newspaper column and social media posts.

F. Objective - growth and guidance for the future

1. Action – develop subcommittees of Board of Trustees to explore structure, responsibilities and follow through of items identified in this Strategic Plan. Possible focus on research and addressing issues related to alternative funding, capital improvements, building maintenance, pros and cons of current library location vs. alternate location, and community member involvement in the library’s future and governance.

2. Action - working with staff from Local History Department, compile and prioritize list of needs/actions that would to improve storage of documents/artifacts in the Local History Department. Share with subcommittee exploring pros and cons of current library building location.

3. Action - choose one action/need identified in Action 2 (above) and use this for fundraising activity identified in Goal IV; Objective C; Action 1.

X. Goal - Staff development and relationship building

A. Objective - to develop and celebrate effective working relationships

1. Action – Feature article pertaining to the LaSalle Branch prominently in newsletter(s) in 50% of issues asking the staff at LaSalle for the article content or idea.
2. Action – spotlight high ratings for staff on Community Survey on website and in newsletter.
3. Action – hold meetings at both locations. Ask LaSalle staff to provide brief tour of building at beginning of meeting at their location.

B. Objective - to increase skills to serve patrons better

1. Action – provide incentives for training using a variety of delivery options including online programs, webinars, conferences and workshops.
2. Action – offer and encourage staff to take training sessions on topics related to customer service skills and dealing with difficult people.
3. Action – encourage staff to attend local and state national professional associations and share their awards, recognition, accomplishments and memberships in newsletters and on social media.



Our Mission is to strengthen our community through lifelong learning with access to varied collections, programs, and assistance with digital literacy.



Our Vision is to be a strong community resource for residents to explore possibilities so that they can reach their full potential.

NIAGARA FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY



The Niagara Falls Public Library
Earl W. Brydges Building
1425 Main Street
Niagara Falls, New York 14305

Library services in Niagara Falls began in 1814, the fledgling library consisted of 40 books. The library grew and with its growth, the library moved to a number of locations including the Third Street School, the Frontier Mart on Falls Street, the Arcade Building on Falls Street, and the Carnegie Library on Main Street and Ashland Avenue. The Carnegie Building was funded with a \$500,000 grant from Pittsburgh Steel magnate Andrew Carnegie.

The Carnegie Building served the community for 70 years. In 1974 the Earl W. Brydges building, designed by architect Paul Rudolph, officially became the home of the Niagara Falls Public Library.

NIAGARA FALLS, NEW YORK



LaSalle Branch of the
Niagara Falls Public Library
8728 Buffalo Avenue
Niagara Falls, New York 14304

When the Village of LaSalle became part of the city of Niagara Falls in 1927, it became a branch of the Niagara Falls Public Library. It already had a home in two small rooms in the village hall on Buffalo Avenue. The building also housed a post office, police station and jail. During the 1950's, the post office moved out, and the LaSalle Branch Library took over that space, almost doubling its size.





NIAGARA FALLS
PUBLIC LIBRARY

Explore the possibilities!