

NORTH BAY PUBLIC LIBRARY

STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2025

NOVEMBER 29, 2021



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North Bay
PUBLIC LIBRARY

FROM THE CHAIR

NORTH BAY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

On behalf of the Board of Directors I'm pleased to present our 2021/25 strategic plan.

This document is the result of extensive community engagement, and dialogue with partners and stakeholders. Over 940 individual responses were received from public surveys, conducted with the broader community, teens, staff and board members.

Special thanks to board members, Heli Vail, Margaret Surtees and James Murton along with staff who worked tirelessly to design survey tools, collect data and synthesize results. This was a long, detailed process undertaken during the restrictive times and regulations of a global pandemic.

The North Bay Public Library has been serving the community since 1895. Along the way, your public library has evolved to meet the changing demands of our diverse communities.

As a valued part of the City, the North Bay Public Library is a welcoming place for people of all ages and from all walks of life offering books and magazines, movies, music and games, book sales, open public and meeting spaces, and all kinds of programming for adults and children. Our resources are available to everyone and all told your North Bay Public Library has over 200,000 items in our holdings, and we add to it each year.

This strategic plan is a reflection of what we heard from the community and what is operationally feasible. We received many great suggestions, some we are unable to do because of restrictions on resources and space, and others have been incorporated into our thinking. This plan outlines where we hope to go in coming months and years.

COVID 19 has impacted our community, and our economy, with many challenges but your North Bay Public Library continues providing materials that inform, entertain and educate. Thanks to the community for your continuing support and thank you to everyone who participated in helping us draft this strategic plan. We are grateful for your input.

We continue to strive to provide excellence in regard to our facility, our materials and our service.

thanks, merci, chi-miigwetch

Dave Wolfe, Chair
North Bay Public Library Board

FROM THE CEO

NORTH BAY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

As we emerge from the pandemic we look forward to meeting the challenges ahead and to fulfilling the goals outlined in our 2021/25 strategic plan.

The result of extensive consultations, undertaken during COVID-19, returned outstanding community input and we are grateful to all of you who took the time to share your thoughts and opinions with us regarding the future of your North Bay Public Library.

As a single branch library we take great pride in providing a high level of service, materials and programming for our clients across all our departments. Our management team, staff, volunteers and board members are keenly aware of the importance of the library within the community as we prepare to implement the findings and recommendations set out in our strategic plan.

This plan reflects what we heard regarding our services, our collections and our facilities and it will help guide our focus, efforts and resources over the course of the next few years.

We remain committed to providing excellence at all levels and are genuinely enthusiastic about the future of your North Bay Public Library.

Ravil Veli, CEO
North Bay Public Library

A BRIEF HISTORY

In 1895, the North Bay Board of Trade offered support for and the creation of a library.

In August of that year, the North Bay Public Library was established in accordance with the Public Library Act making it a free public service, eligible for provincial funding. Your North Bay Public Library is the oldest public library in Northern Ontario.

Our first location was upstairs in the Cormack Block on Main Street. The collection consisted of 152 books and newspapers and magazines housed in two large rooms.

In 1911 council applied for Carnegie Foundation funding, stating “the town would provide a suitable site at the corner of Wyld and McIntyre and supply \$1500 a year for maintenance”. The Carnegie Foundation donated \$15,000 and Local architect H.W. Angus handled the design. The Carnegie Library opened in 1914 at a cost of \$17,790.

The Carnegie served the citizens for the next fifty plus years with a one-story addition added in 1960 to expand children’s services. It became obvious the building was too small to serve a growing population and a new library, our current location, was built in 1966 just a few steps from the Carnegie site.

Your North Bay Public Library currently has approximately 200,000 holdings. In addition to books and magazines, we have DVD movies, music on CDs and electronic games, we continue to expand digital offerings and provide a variety of technical equipment and leisure resources.



MISSION, VALUES AND VISION

MISSION



Enriching Lives,
Building Community,
Inspiring Ideas

VALUES



Valuing an innovative
community-centred
environment that is
respectful, equitable,
and accountable.



VISION

Enriching the lives of
the North Bay community
by providing an inclusive,
accessible environment
where individuals and
groups can learn, play,
create and explore.

DATA COLLECTION

The 2021/25 Strategic Plan for your North Bay Public Library was developed by the Library Board.

“Yesterday’s libraries are vastly different from today’s and the libraries of tomorrow will be even more different.”

Surveys were created for specific groups for the broader community, teens, staff and Board members. Surveys were distributed via electronic means, with hard copies included in curbside pickup packages of library loans. Stakeholders and community partners were invited via Email, with a direct link to the survey, to participate.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic environment provided challenges in data collection, over 940 survey responses were submitted. This is a significant number and reflects the desire and interest of the community to provide feedback regarding library operations and future development.

Yesterday’s libraries are vastly different from today’s and the libraries of tomorrow will be even more different. Through ongoing public input and involvement, we are committed to enhancing the value of the North Bay Public Library.



RESULTS

Surveys revealed numerous positive perceptions of the North Bay Public Library. Many respondents stated they appreciated having the North Bay Public Library in the community. Access to varied resources, print, visual, virtual, technical was valued by many respondents. Some commented on the helpfulness and positivity of the library staff. A majority of respondents indicated there is no need for new space. Some respondents offered suggestions to improve current space. Some suggestions are unable to be accommodated due to budget restrictions, accessibility issues and limitations/challenges with current physical space limitations.

THE NUMBER OF RESPONSES:



891

General survey

9

Teen survey

41

Staff survey

8

Board survey

LIBRARY USAGE: (of those responding)



40%

Indicated they come into the library a few times a month.

36%

A few times a year.



24%

stated they use library online resources a few times a month.

27%

A few times a year.

37%

Never



SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS:

42% Aged 60 or over,

33% were 40 to 59,

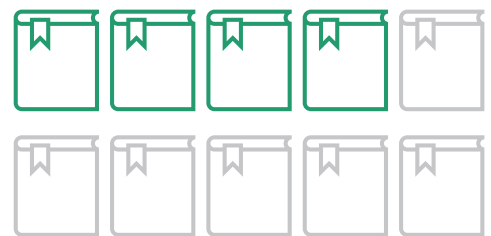
24% were 20 to 39, and

1% were 19 and under.

*** NOTE:** Curbside service was implemented in response to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions implemented by the Government of Ontario:

41%

Indicated they used curbside service,



(with **89%** of those indicating they used curbside a few times a month.)

STRATEGIC GOALS

Vibrant physical and virtual space.

Informative, timely, accessible communication.

Resources reflecting the diverse interests of the community.

Engaging programming for adults, youth and children.

Exemplary governance practices.

VIBRANT PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL SPACE

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK:

Comments reflected visions of a 21st century library and included suggestions like:

More rooms for small club gatherings.

A small coffee and tea service with muffins, sandwiches - like a small cafeteria which could also service meetings.

Bright colours as you come in along with plants for greenery.

Quiet colours in reading and study areas.

More spaces for private reading, study and work.

More child-centred environment in the children's department.

Establishment of makerspace.

Accessibility improvements such as more room in the stacks between the shelves (less constricted and airier).

Better lighting for those with visual issues was also mentioned.

Include a quiet, dark space for neuro-diverse individuals.

Need for better organized spaces as 'areas seemed crowded', 'jammed' and not easy to access for those with mobility issues. Shelves for some were either too high or too low.

Review tech needs for patrons of all ages.
Review current placement of computers in all departments.

Review efficiencies and updating of software for e-books, catalogue and sign out, return and overdue procedures.

Upgrade and establish an engaging virtual space on the website.

THE PLAN FORWARD:

Create a five-year plan, based on survey data and other sources, accompanied by a budget, to develop and improve physical and virtual space.

Review, by department, space availability.

Continue to implement accessibility and mobility enhancements as permitted by budget and physical space.

Offer programs, resources and coaching to support library users in using and developing 21st century print and digital literacies.

INFORMATIVE, TIMELY, ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK:

Respondents are pleased with the welcoming nature and helpfulness of staff.

Many indicated they were unaware of programs, activities and initiatives that were being offered either in the library or online.

Respondents identified a need for methods of making them aware of all opportunities offered at the library and online.

The data showed that the greatest percentage of users were 60 or over.

THE PLAN FORWARD:

Develop and implement a communication and marketing plan and monitor on an ongoing basis.

Create strategies to engage those under 60.

Review interior and exterior signage and monitors.

Establish a new website and implement a strategy for better use of social media.

RESOURCES REFLECTING THE DIVERSE INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK:

Feedback indicated that the demand for e-book resources has increased but the availability and variety of e-resources was limited.

Many indicated they were pleased with the availability of electronic and hard copy resources but the turnaround time for both was too lengthy.

Respondents also indicated the library should offer more resources for individuals of various cultures, languages and origins.

The data also reflected a need for more resources such as magazines, especially e-magazines, audio books and music.

With the creation of the teen room, there is a need for resources that support this age group such as the availability of charging stations and a 3D printer.

Other suggestions included software such as Pressreader, Hoopla, Python, Mango and JackBox.

THE PLAN FORWARD:

Create a committee of staff and teens to discuss resource needs for a Teen Room.

Improve Wi-Fi throughout the building.

Explore community partnerships to enhance the collection to reflect and support the diversity of the community.

Review on an annual basis advancements in technology (hardware and software) and acquire upgrades when and as feasible.

ENGAGING PROGRAMMING FOR ADULTS, YOUTH AND CHILDREN

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK:

Feedback indicates library users appreciate programming offered and have suggestions for additional programming such as;

Learning a new language.

Writing/reading online courses.

Book clubs online.

Public speaking.

Visiting/virtual authors.

Films and newly released movies.

Instruction in arts and crafts including: knitting, quilting, crafts, painting and sewing.

Life Skills and social interaction such as: job search, house/apt. hunting, finances, banking, wellness, diversity, yoga, meditation, medications, mental health, grief, caregiving, environment/climate, conversation groups, debating, games, puzzles, Trivia and cards.

Assistance/programs to assist with things like computer literacy, how to navigate Facebook, PowerPoint, Excel, etc..., cyber security, online research, archiving personal records.

Virtual clubs for teens and children.

THE PLAN FORWARD:

Complete interdepartmental gap analysis of programming and create a plan for program enhancements.

Partner with community groups to enhance programs for adults, teens and children.

EXEMPLARY GOVERNANCE PRACTICES

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK:

There was a strong response about the positive value of the library to the community.

Many comments also spoke to the fact that the library is one of the "free" resources available to a community and how valuable this is to the community as a whole.

Investigating ways in which late fees can be removed would further enhance the elimination of costs to the community for use of the library.

THE PLAN FORWARD:

Ensure the Library evaluates strategic plans regularly to meet changing community needs.

Provide the community with a safe, welcoming, clean and accessible facility.

Review and update policies to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and the changing realities.

Prioritize needs and wants and align when possible with strategic goals and budget.

Investigate fundraising options and opportunities.