



AURORA  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY

PLACE OF  
**POSSIBILITIES**



**STRATEGIC PLAN**

2017 - 2021

# INTRODUCTION

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Aurora Public Library's Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021 charts a new direction for the Library and community to inspire and enable innovation, creativity and learning.

While APL has long played a key role in supporting community development through successful outreach, Place of Possibilities extends the relationship to a community-led model that is based on ongoing consultation between the Library and our residents and stakeholders.

Knowing that success comes from collaboration, APL enlisted input from staff, the Board and the public by incorporating the extensive data provided by the community to the Facility Needs Assessment (2015).

Place of Possibilities concentrates on three broad areas of activity: Build Community, Place of Possibilities and Organizational Capacity. From these strategic goals, we have developed specific targets that will guide our Business Plans over the next five years.

Aurora Public Library will continue to provide traditional collections and services, but together with our community, we will stretch and expand in fresh and exciting ways, creating a Place of Possibilities for people of all ages and interests.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Aurora Public Library would like to acknowledge our Library Board members for their participation in the brainstorming sessions that formed the foundations of this document. We would also like to thank our staff for their input at a daylong workshop and through ongoing conversations.

The Strategic Planning Committee was composed of Tom Connor (Board), Nancy Eveleigh Browne (Board), Jill Foster (CEO), Christine Kalan-Tidman (Staff) Reccia Mandelcorn (Staff), Maida Rae (Staff) and Polly Ross (Staff).



# COMMUNITY-LED

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Aurora Public Library's Strategic Plan reflects a fresh and invigorated social contract with our community. Our "community-led" approach redefines our purpose and delivers collections and services in collaboration with the needs of the community we serve.

Knowing that our community will continue to evolve, APL understands the need to constantly update the contract. We will do this by maintaining a two-way dialogue to identify the community's expectations for where they think we are and where they want us to go.

## Mission

Aurora Public Library builds community by sparking connections, enriching lives and contributing vibrant spaces for discovery.

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## Values

**Intellectual freedom:** We provide access to diverse expressions of knowledge and creativity.

**Literacy:** We foster literacy and nurture lifelong learning.

**Inclusiveness:** We support accessible and equitable services.

**Innovation:** We anticipate and respond to the changing environment.

**Accountability:** We ensure that library services are relevant and administered in a fiscally responsible manner.

**Service Excellence:** We serve with integrity and skill, helping our community explore, connect and engage.

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## Vision

We are essential to the community. Our inclusive and collaborative approach makes Aurora a better place to live. Through innovative technology, engaged staff and evolving spaces, we transform lives by supporting literacy and cultivating creativity, conversation and joy.

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## Strategic Directions

Our Strategic Directions or Goals speak to three broad areas of activity – **Build Community**, **Place of Possibilities** and **Organizational Capacity**.

# BUILD COMMUNITY

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We will **build** and **strengthen** a community-led culture with residents guiding our service delivery and user experiences.

1

Engage in dynamic conversations with the community to identify strengths, gaps, needs & priorities

- a. Hold frequent focus groups (in/out of facility) with a variety of demographic groups and areas of the community
- b. Conduct regular surveys (in/out /online )
- c. Provide a mechanism for the public to participate in the development of library collections

2

Enhance partnerships and develop new alliances

- a. Compile and maintain a master list of all civic and community groups that serve Aurora residents
- b. Work with community organizations to identify the most effective ways the Library can assist them in realizing their objectives
- c. Expand cultural initiatives to attract new users
- d. Explore the establishment of a Friends of the Library group

3

Analyze services and resources and adapt to meet the needs of our diverse demographic

- a. Create an internal user experience team to improve customer satisfaction
- b. Develop a community asset map (languages, special needs, LGBTQ, business, newcomers, etc.)
- c. Review our service delivery model, reshaping and adapting to meet identified needs
- d. Develop multilingual collections based on community needs and feedback
- e. Extend service hours
- f. Assess policies and procedures to remove systemic barriers that may exist



# PLACE OF POSSIBILITIES

We will provide **exceptional physical and virtual spaces** to meet diverse needs and expectations.

1

Expand and refine the Library's physical and virtual presence

- a. Expand physical space based on recommendations of the 2015 Facility Needs Assessment
- b. Explore alternative service points eg: kiosk, mobile delivery
- c. Identify barriers to service and investigate solutions
- d. Utilize social media activity to engage new segments of the community
- e. Advance digital literacy through new online resources, services and programs
- f. Digitize local history collections and develop effective marketing of these materials to increase access
- g. Optimize website and digital content use eg: by exploring the implementation of search engine optimization, linked data, Google Analytics, etc.
- h. Expand access to technology in the community

2

Provide diverse spaces for gathering, sharing and learning

- a. Introduce digital media tools and software
- b. Reconfigure spaces to accommodate flexible programming and activities
- c. Create mixed-use spaces for quiet study and collaborative activities
- d. Provide monitors throughout the Library to promote programs, activities, news & events
- e. Connect with the community by providing additional off-site programming
- f. Design and equip interior spaces to support creativity and innovation

3

Develop new paths to learning for personal and professional growth

- a. Seek partnerships to expand opportunities for learning, including self-directed and informal classes and workshops
- b. Optimize community creativity by actively supporting meetups and other non-traditional uses for library space
- c. Deliver learning opportunities and coaching to assist in the development of technological skills

# ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

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We will **adapt** and **grow** through conversation, consultation, education and engagement.

1

Create a culture where ideas and innovation are valued and encouraged



- a. Establish a framework to encourage staff ideas, creative solutions and innovation
- b. Research and establish best practices to implement a community-led culture
- c. Develop additional resources to assist in staff training, skills updates and self-directed learning

2

Establish best practices for planning and evaluating library services and programs



- a. Devise feedback mechanisms to gauge satisfaction with programs, events and training opportunities
- b. Design and implement an outcome based measurement system for targeted program and event evaluation
- c. Adapt programs, events and services to align with evaluation and feedback

3

Revitalize the Library's organizational structure to best deliver the strategic plan



- a. Review staff roles to support a more dynamic, nimble and modern service delivery
- b. Develop human resources processes that will instill corporate values of service excellence and innovation
- c. Develop staff leadership skills and opportunities for growth
- d. Invest time and resources in technological training for all staff in order to position the Library as a community hub for technology
- e. Assess and communicate the desirable skills and attributes required of Library Board members to advance the work and vision of Aurora Public Library



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