



## St. Helens Public Library

### 2023 – 2028 Strategic Plan

"A library is a collection of resources in a variety of formats that is (1) organized by information professionals or other experts who (2) provide convenient physical, digital, bibliographic, or intellectual access and (3) offer targeted services and programs (4) with the mission of educating, informing, or entertaining a variety of audiences (5) and the goal of stimulating individual learning and advancing society as a whole." (p.1) – *The Librarian's Book of Lists* (Chicago: ALA, 2010), George Eberhart\*

The role of the St. Helens Public Library is always evolving. No longer just a quiet building holding books, like other libraries we have become a multi-faceted community and cultural center which provides a safe, welcoming environment for all who visit and protects free speech and the expression of ideas. The framework of our mission is serving the information literacy needs of all ages.

As defined by the American Library Association, "To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information."

At our library, information and content are provided using a broad range of media (e.g., books, DVDs, audiobooks, cultural passes, online resources, and the Library of Things), as well as supporting the Library community in developing their *own* information and content (e.g., creator spaces, and arts and music programs). Our community's vulnerable, marginalized populations and diverse community groups are recognized, valued by our library, and supported through targeted services.

In addition to providing face-to-face services in our building, the St. Helens Public Library brings services to community members through outreach programs (e.g., visits to preschools and senior center visits) and virtual services.

\* <https://libguides.ala.org/library-definition> (retrieved 6/11/2023)

1) Heartsill Young, ed., *The ALA Glossary of Library and Information Science* (ALA, 1983)

(2) Robert S. Martin, "Libraries and Learners in the Twenty-First Century," Cora Paul Bomar Lecture, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, April 5, 2003.

(3) Deanna B. Marcum, "Research Questions for the Digital Era Library," *Library Trends* 51 (Spring 2003): 636-651.

## OPPORTUNITY:

Since its inception, the St. Helens Public Library has expanded its services and programs to meet community needs. Despite its relatively small size, staffing, and resource constraints, the library “punches above its weight” by implementing cutting-edge offerings such as the Makerspace.

Use of library services and the Library’s benefit to the community is limited by lack of awareness of the types of services available; limited resources that create a barrier to use of library services for some community members; and efficacy of current modes of communication. Reevaluating and updating both communication and opportunities for library access is paramount to effectively serving everyone in our community.

The St. Helens Public Library has a growing list of events and services available to patrons, the community, and cardholders from Passport libraries from Astoria to Wilsonville. Outreach opportunities are expanding, giving access to many more options for formal and informal modes of communication. An update of the Library brand will bring it in line with current needs, (e.g., use of the logo in print, on social media, and others). Updating the brand will also offer a fresh look to our patrons and community members already aware of the Library and will attract people who may not already “see” the Library.

We must have the resources and means to transform the Library as we continue to meet and anticipate the needs of our community, to ensure that it can meet current and future needs and expand its reach to support and connect with all members of the community.

## **Goal 1: Develop the Library as the community’s “living room.”**

### **DESIRED OUTCOMES:**

- Be a safe, neutral environment where everyone is welcomed, valued, and included.
- Act as a center for the arts.
- Serve as the community’s “university” and entrepreneur hub.
- Rebrand the Library to reflect its role in the community and increase community engagement.
- Maximize service to the community, e.g., expand open hours.

#### **Initiative #1 - Transformation plan**

Develop a transformation plan for City Council consideration which reflects the evolving nature of libraries and will shape the Library to meet current and future community needs. The transformation plan will include: (1) a long-term vision for the Library including options to maximize service to the community; (2) rebranding proposal; and (3) funding considerations and options.

#### **Initiative #2 - Facilities plan**

Develop a facilities plan which identifies needed improvements to the current facility and desired features of a potential renovated or expanded facility. Consider the addition of resources that enhance community activity.

#### **Initiative #3 - Land acknowledgment**

Develop and implement a formal statement which recognizes and respects indigenous peoples as traditional stewards of the land on which the Library is situated and the enduring relationship that exists between indigenous peoples and their traditional lands.

## **Goal 2: Engage the community in lifelong learning.**

### **DESIRED OUTCOMES:**

- Support patrons in searching for, finding, and using information in many formats.
- Support at-home learning for parents of young children.
- Support homeschool families.
- Welcome adolescents to continue reading and learning more independently.
- Serve as a substantial source of information for high school and collegiate learners.
- Support patrons in job searching and educational opportunities.
- Support entrepreneurs and other members of the business community seeking to grow their business.
- Provide programs and services to vulnerable and marginalized members of the community.
- Ensure that programs and services reflect and support diverse community groups.
- Partner with city departments, key stakeholders, and other organizations to deliver services to the community.
- Provide resources and programs for entertainment for all ages.

#### **Initiative #1 - Amplify information literacy for all ages**

Information literacy encompasses increasing direct engagement with all ages. For children, this takes the forms of an active summer reading program, regularly scheduled programs, and outreach. For all ages, maintaining a vital and relevant collection, offering bilingual programming for all ages, and collaborating with Columbia County Historical Society to offer and promote adult programming such as visiting authors and writing workshops. These opportunities are offered by staff, volunteers, and members of the community.

#### **Initiative #2 - Different ways of learning, engaging with ideas and information**

Early childhood goals include increasing hands-on activities for infants and toddlers, hosting additional summer performances, and offering monthly themed activities for children. Goals for adults and teens include a full complement of digital and online support for those who cannot go to the Library, as well as in-person and virtual programs and other learning opportunities through the Library.

**Initiative #3 - Enhance K-12 learning**

Child Development support for parents will include offering literacy workshops and interactive book recommendation sessions and setting up a pop-up model environment for young children.

Continue to support homeschooling families, educators, students, and local schools, offering after-school activities, enhancing current partnerships, and developing new ones, and exploring the viability of educator and student library cards.

**Initiative #4 - Engage the maker community**

Support a maker community centered on the Makerspace using private and public funding sources. Partner with other organizations, e.g., PCC-OMIC and the St. Helens School District STEAM labs. Continue to evolve the Makerspace to ensure continued relevance.

**Initiative #5 - Provide information, resources and (where appropriate) training to address a variety of community needs.**

Assist community members in finding the information to help them meet their needs, e.g., housing, employment, social services, support for small businesses, technology access and training.

### **Goal 3: Enhance access to library services.**

#### **DESIRED OUTCOMES:**

- Expand opportunities for community members to access library resources and travel capacity by providing mobile services, and access to services and materials outside of business hours.
- Increase communication about the availability of library services to underserved citizens.
- Build and foster community connections both face-to-face and virtually.
- Partner with local government, key stakeholders, and other organizations to deliver services to the community and develop the volunteer base.
- Communicate to community members (including Passport holders and Columbia County residents) the Library's presence outside of the Columbia Center the Library offerings and its events and special programs.

#### **Initiative #1 - Reach out to known and potential users of library services**

Identify library services useful to members of the community who do not have ready access to the Library. Create and use a wide variety of targeted information strategies relevant to all members of our community and use locations throughout the City where we are most likely to reach them to draw in new users and encourage constructive feedback. Work with the Friends of the St. Helens Public Library and other volunteers to support this effort.

#### **Initiative #2 - Develop a volunteer base**

Reach out to community partners including schools, local judicial officers, and city communications officials to solicit volunteers and increase the awareness of volunteering possibilities. Engage community members to serve as volunteers in a variety of capacities.

#### **Initiative #3 - Reevaluate newsletter and communications for efficacy**

Assess and improve the Library's online presence. Upgrade library website and consider capacity to develop a mobile application.

#### **Initiative #4 - Evaluate feasibility of courier service**

Analyze opportunities and risks to Columbia County libraries; assess staff and volunteer availability; determine geographical limitations; and develop a proposed plan for delivery of library resources to community members throughout Columbia County.

**Initiative # 5 - Evaluate feasibility of a bookmobile**

Reach out to determine community interest in a mobile library service; identify locations that would be best served; identify appropriate hours and time; evaluate financial and community resources necessary to begin the service; and develop a plan to implement.

**Initiative # 6 - Explore options to provide services to out-of-city residents**

Coordinate with the Library's City Council liaison on possible successful approaches. Determine which geographical areas are appropriate and what conditions are in use, e.g., fundraising, quarterly and annual library cards.