



Conant Public Library

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Strategic Plan

Approved January 2026

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I. Mission

The mission of the Conant Public Library (CPL) is to provide free, open, and convenient access to materials for all Winchester residents. We support lifelong learning, foster personal growth, preserve and share local and ancestral history, and enhance the quality of life in our community.

II. Purpose of the Strategic Plan

The CPL Board of Trustees, in collaboration with the Library Director, developed this Strategic Plan as a living, evolving framework to serve as:

- A guide for the work of the Trustees and the Director
- A reflection of community priorities and interests.
- A roadmap connecting community needs, goals and actions.
- A tool for communicating direction to residents and town leaders.
- This plan outlines strategic focus areas, goals, and objectives designed to uphold CPL's mission while establishing a concrete guide for future decision-making.

III. Strategic Focus Areas

- A. Community Outreach & Engagement
- B. Building & Environment Stewardship
- C. Collections
- D. Leadership & Governance

A. Community Outreach & Engagement

Goal:

Foster an inclusive, visible, and collaborative community hub that supports the needs, interests, and history of Winchester residents of all ages.

Objectives:

- Offer diverse, multigenerational programs and services—specifically supporting children, teens, families, and older adults.
- Collaborate with local organizations, including neighboring libraries, nonprofits, and civic groups.
- Expand and strengthen our partnership with the Winchester School.
- Increase library visibility and brand identity through marketing, advocacy, and ambassador engagement (trustees, volunteers, community champions).
- Build an inclusive environment that nurtures peer, intergenerational, and professional engagement.
- Preserve community memory by expanding the museum collection and documenting the museum artifacts.
- Identify and protect Winchester's public history through archival preservation and partnerships with community experts and historical institutions.

Steps to Accomplish Goals

Programming

- Conduct annual community needs assessments to identify interests across age groups.
- Develop and market a balanced calendar of activities, events and opportunities that are targeted to appropriate demographics with print and digital media.
- Pilot new program formats (drop-in, short series, off-site, hybrid) to reach broader audiences.

Local Organizations

- Identify existing and look for new partnerships with local organizations, examples include ACCESS, ELMM, Winchester Historical Society, Kiwanis.
- Formalize partnerships through shared programming, co-sponsored events, and resource sharing.
- Identify current contact information for leaders within those organizations. Consider staff or board liaisons to manage and sustain key partnerships.
- Participate in town-wide events and initiatives to reinforce the library's role as a community collaborator.

Winchester School

- Establish regular communication channels with school administrators, teachers, and librarians.
- Align library programs and collections with school curricula and student needs.
- Expand school visits, class tours, and library card sign-up initiatives.
- Explore joint programming, such as author visits, research skills workshops, and summer learning initiatives.

Increased Visibility and Marketing

- Utilize Marketing Committee to develop a consistent library brand identity across print, digital, and physical spaces.
- Create a marketing plan and social media calendar to provide a road map for consistent messaging.
- Expand marketing efforts through newsletters, local media, and community calendars.
- Participate in town-wide events and initiatives to reinforce brand identity and event marketing.

Inclusive Environment

- Provide staff training in customer service, accessibility, and inclusive engagement.
- Create spaces and programs that encourage peer-to-peer and intergenerational interaction.
- Offer programs and materials that reflect the diversity of Winchester residents.
- Regularly seek community feedback to identify and remove barriers to participation.

Preserve Community Memory

- Inventory, document, and digitize the museum collection and artifacts.
- Develop a long-term plan for collection care, storage, and accessibility.
- Engage volunteers, historians, and community members to assist with documentation projects.
- Create programs, exhibits, and online content that highlight Winchester's history.

Public History

- Identify gaps in the historical record and prioritize preservation efforts.
- Partner with historical societies, archives, and academic institutions to share expertise.
- Seek grants and funding to support archival preservation and digitization.

B. Building & Environment Stewardship

Goal:

Maintain and enhance the CPL facility to ensure a safe, accessible, welcoming, and historically preserved environment that serves both present and future community needs.

Objectives:

- Preserve the historical integrity and character of the building.
- Upgrade the HVAC system to improve comfort, efficiency and reliability.
- Foster inclusive and inviting indoor and outdoor space, prioritizing accessibility.
- Improve visibility through updated signage and parking solutions.
- Develop museum spaces including archival work areas, rotating exhibits, and genealogical resource access.
- Address basement limitations to add storage and possible community use.

Steps to Accomplish Goal

Historic Integrity of the Building

- Conduct regular assessments with town professionals.
- Document building features and restoration efforts for long-term reference.
- Seek grants and funding opportunities specific to historic buildings.

Upgrade HVAC

- Present estimate to town officials for approval to move forward
- Obtain additional estimates for infrastructure updates (electrical etc)
- Obtain permission to access library capital improvement fund
- Explore funding sources, including town capital planning, grants, and incentives.
- Identify additional town and library trust funds that could be used.
- Market the hell out of the upgrade and offer as a summer cooling location.

Create Inclusive and Accessible Spaces

- Conduct an ADA and accessibility audit of indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Improve wayfinding, lighting, seating, and furniture for varied user needs.
- Enhance outdoor spaces to support programming and informal community use.
- Gather patron feedback to guide space improvements.

Improve Visibility, Signage & Parking

- Update exterior and interior signage for clarity, accessibility, and branding consistency.
- Improve directional signage from nearby streets and public areas.
- Collaborate with the town to evaluate parking availability, safety, and traffic flow.
- Improve pedestrian access, bike parking, and drop-off areas.
- Ensure signage reflects both the library and museum identity.

Museum & Archival Spaces

- Design dedicated areas for archival processing, secure storage, and research access.
- Create flexible exhibit spaces for rotating displays and community-curated exhibits.
- Improve access to genealogical and historical research materials.
- Implement preservation standards for climate control, storage, and handling.
- Engage historians, volunteers, and partner institutions in planning and development.

Basement Limitations & Expand Usable Space

- Conduct a structural and environmental assessment of basement conditions.
- Identify options for moisture control, safety upgrades, and storage improvements.
- Explore potential uses for community and improved staff space where feasible.
- Develop a phased improvement plan aligned with funding and preservation needs to ensure any basement use meets safety, accessibility, and historic standards.

C. Collections

Goal

Maintain a modern, dynamic and diverse collection that reflects community needs, while supporting CPL's historical focus.

Objectives

- Develop a "Library of Things" to broaden access to nontraditional materials.
- Expand tools and materials supporting homeschooling families as well as educators.
- Regularly assess and evolve collection priorities to reflect community interests.
- Ensure responsible stewardship of both library and museum collections.
- Expand digital resources and integrate modern library tools and platforms.
- Preserve the library's commitment to books while integrating new formats and technologies.

Steps to Accomplish Goal

Develop a "Library of Things"

- Establish clear policies for selection, lending, maintenance, and replacement.
- Identify community needs, interests, and prepare appropriate storage
- Pilot a small, high-demand collection (e.g., agricultural tools).
- Develop a plan and policy to accept and decline donations.
- Promote the collection through programs, demonstrations, and marketing.
- Evaluate usage regularly and expand based on demand and sustainability.

Homeschooling Families & Educators

- Partner with local educators and homeschooling groups to guide selection.
- Develop curated collections for different age groups and subject areas.
- Expand curriculum-aligned materials, learning kits, and teaching resources.
- Align collections with complementary programming and workshops.
- Provide lists and guides highlighting available resources.

Assess & Evolve Collection Priorities

- Review and update collection development policies regularly.
- Conduct ongoing collection analysis using circulation data and community feedback.
- Balance popular materials with emerging interests and underserved topics.
- Use targeted weeding to keep collections current, accessible, and relevant.
- Report collection outcomes and trends to stakeholders (trustees, town boards etc.) in annual reports and budget meetings.

Responsible Stewardship of Collections

- Maintain and update policies for acquisition, care, and deaccessioning.
- Follow best practices for preservation, storage, and handling.
- Train staff and volunteers in collection care and management.
- Seek grants and partnerships to support preservation efforts.

Expand Digital Resources

- Evaluate and adopt emerging library technologies that enhance patron's offerings.
- Integrate digital resources into the library's website.
- Provide training and support to help patrons use digital tools effectively.
- Monitor usage and adjust subscriptions to maximize value.

Balance Print Collections with New Formats & Technologies

- Continue to prioritize books while expanding alternative formats.
- Promote cross-format discovery through displays and staff recommendations.
- Reassess space and format balance regularly to align with community needs.

D. Leadership & Governance

Goal

Build a sustainable, accountable organization through collaboration, and resource management.

Objectives

- Expand committee participation by adding non-board volunteers.
- Maintain fiscal responsibility through responsible planning and budgeting.
- Diversify funding through grants, fundraising, partnerships, and other opportunities.
- Outline current funding sources to strengthen long-term planning.
- Review committee work to ensure alignment with strategic goals.
- Keep personnel and organizational policies up to date.

Steps to Accomplish Goal

Expand Committee Participation & Engagement

- Identify opportunities to include non-board volunteers, community members, and subject-matter experts on committees.
- Develop clear committee roles, expectations, and guidelines.
- Recruit participants through targeted outreach and transparent nomination processes.
- Provide orientation and ongoing support for committee members.
- Evaluate committee effectiveness annually.

Maintain Fiscal Responsibility & Oversight

- Continue to produce monthly reports for trustees and staff.
- Develop annual budget aligned with strategic priorities.

- Conduct regular budget reviews and respond to changing priorities and funding sources.
- Establish and review clear financial and accountability policies practices.
- Review account balances for SBW, TD Bank, and trusts.
- Review financial and investment policies periodically to ensure best practices.

Diversify Funding Sources

- Identify and prioritize grant opportunities and strengthen fundraising initiatives aligned with library and museum goals.
- Explore partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and foundations.
- Track funding sources to reduce reliance on a single revenue stream.
- Evaluate return on investment for fundraising activities.

Strengthen Long-Term Financial Planning

- Document and review all current funding sources and revenue streams.
- Develop contingency plans for funding fluctuations.
- Align fundraising and grant strategies with long-term priorities.
- Share financial planning updates with key stakeholders.

Ensure Committees Align with Strategic Goals

- Review committee charges and work plans annually.
- Align committee objectives with the strategic plan and board priorities.
- Require committees to report progress and outcomes monthly.
- Revise committees that no longer align with strategic needs.

Maintain Current Personnel & Organizational Policies

- Conduct scheduled reviews of personnel, governance, and operational policies.
- Update policies to reflect legal requirements and best practices.
- Provide training to ensure staff and board understand policy changes.
- Maintain accessible documentation for staff, board, and volunteers.
- Ensure policies support equity, transparency, and organizational health.

IV. Conclusion

The Strategic Plan will grow and adapt along with our community. The Board of Trustees and Library Director will use it to guide decision-making, allocate resources responsibly, and measure progress. Through a focus on outreach, stewardship of our spaces, strong collection development, and leadership, CPL affirms its commitment to serving as a welcoming center for learning, connection, and community history.

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