

# T.B. SCOTT FREE LIBRARY

## STRATEGIC PLAN

### 2024-2028







## Planning for the future

# FOUNDATIONS

### Introduction

As the heart of our community, the public library plays a vital role in fostering education, information access, and cultural enrichment. To ensure our library's continued growth and relevance, it is crucial to develop a comprehensive strategic plan that reflects the needs and aspirations of our diverse stakeholders.

Through a series of focus groups, surveys, and consultations; we have engaged community groups, library staff, Friends of the Library, the Board of Trustees, and community members, capturing valuable insights that have shaped this strategic plan. This document outlines our shared vision and objectives, serving as a roadmap for the library's future endeavors.



### Some typical comments from survey respondents:

*"All the staff really provide first-class service above and beyond!"*

*"The breadth of the collection is great. I appreciate being able to find most everything I want without having to make a request."*

## VISION

To cultivate a library environment so vital and inclusive that everyone desires to be an active library user.

## MISSION

Serving the Merrill area through traditional and innovative services, T.B. Scott Free Library connects people to their community and the world, promotes literacy and civic engagement, encourages and supports life-long learning, ensures free and open access to ideas, and provides opportunities to keep community members culturally, mentally, and socially engaged.



### T.B. Scott Free Library depends on generous supporters like you!

Donations can be made online:

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Donations are also accepted in-person or via mail:

**T.B. Scott Free Library**

**106 W. 1st Street**

**Merrill, WI 54452**



**Donate**



# 2024-2028 GOALS

**Goal #1: Lifelong Learning**

**Goal #2: Awareness**

**Goal #3: Programming**

**Goal #4: Collections**

**Goal #5: Facilities**



## Goal #1

# LIFELONG LEARNING

**Promote and encourage community members of all ages to discover the joy of reading and to become lifelong readers and learners.**

*Action Steps:*

Action Step 1.1 Maintain current programming and continue active promotion of literacy programs and events.

Action Step 1.2 Enhance library spaces that help parents and other caregivers develop early literacy skills in children age birth – 5 years.

Action Step 1.3 Provide responsive, educational opportunities for staff to grow and expand their knowledge and skills in order to support patrons as lifelong readers and learners.



## Typical comments from survey respondents:

*"Increase ways to 'get the word out.'"*





## Goal #2

# AWARENESS

**Increase the visibility and recognition of T.B. Scott Free Library and its offerings to the residents of Merrill and the surrounding community.**

*Action Steps:*

Action Step 2.1 Seek out sustainable partnerships and collaboration opportunities with local businesses, the school district, community organizations, and/or other municipal departments.

Action Step 2.2 Continue to update the T.B. Scott Free Library website on a regular basis, to include new and upcoming programs and services and remove outdated information in a timely manner.

Action Step 2.3 Educate the community regarding library resources to increase traffic to the library in person and online.

Action Step 2.4 Create a greater sense of inclusion and sense of community through customer service and promotion.

Action Step 2.5 Develop and maintain a public awareness and promotion plan.



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## Goal #3

# PROGRAMMING

**Develop and execute programming, serving a broad range of ages and interests, expanding our awareness of diversity in our community and to promote civic engagement.**

*Action Steps:*

Action Step 3.1 Continue to provide technology-related programs.

Action Step 3.2 Develop a staff schedule that allows for community outreach, professional development, and additional library programs.

Action Step 3.3 Collaborate with local agencies to create programs to support the diverse interests of adult residents.

Action Step 3.4 Create programs for all ages that highlight local talent, resources and cultural heritage.

Action Step 3.5 Provide programs that promote school readiness and improve learning outcomes while supporting diversity.

**Typical  
comment  
from survey  
respondents:**

*"Offer  
monthly  
social  
gathering."*





## Goal #4

## COLLECTIONS

**Provide collections responsive to community interests and needs and the diverse population the library serves.**

*Action Steps:*

Action Step 4.1 Continue to enhance collections that introduce new ideas, build skills, and stimulate curiosity.

Action Step 4.2 Collaborate with local entities for the development of programming that facilitates personal and professional growth for the members of the community.

Action Step 4.3 Collaborate with area adult service facilities to enhance outreach programming to be held on and off site.

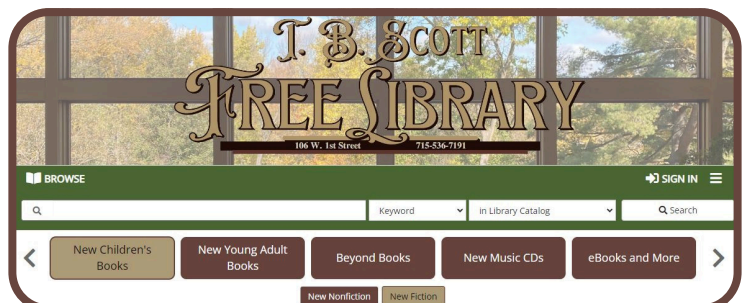
Action Step 4.4 Support area schools in providing resources for teachers and students.

Action Step 4.5 Provide programs and collections that incorporate STEM education opportunities for all ages.



### Typical comments from survey respondents:

*"Wonderful selection of materials including Library of Things, audio, and research materials."*



## Goal #5

# FACILITIES

**Promote and encourage use of the library as a safe, comfortable, and welcoming place to meet and interact with others.**

*Action Steps:*

Action Step 5.1 Revise and maintain the master capital plan for the library that focuses on areas not included in the City's 20-year capital plan.

Action Step 5.2 Design and maintain spaces that are adequate and flexible to meet the community's needs, such as conversation spaces, creativity, education and engagement.

Action Step 5.3 Educate the community regarding library resources to increase traffic to the library in person and online.

Action Step 5.4 Curate materials that allow for fun and imaginative play and exploration.

Action Step 5.5 Increase efficiencies in the library space to reduce unnecessary burdens on staff time and enhance the patron experience.

## Typical comment from survey respondents:

*"Preservation of the historical  
building is a blessing. The library  
is a gem!"*





# PLANNING PROCESS

## Goals of the Process:

- To maintain a high level of satisfaction among library users by providing services and programs responsive to our community needs
- To assess the utilization of space within our library for best use of the facility in the changing environment of the library today
- To assess the utilization of staff to best deliver services in the constantly changing environment of the library today

## Proposed Timeline:

### June 2023

- Staff will make site visits to libraries throughout Wisconsin prior to July
  - Laurie, Andrea, and Maria will be making visits to five libraries
  - Summary of findings based on site visits will be created

### September 2023

- Review existing information about the community and the library
  - Present existing information on library demographics to the Board of Trustees
  - Present Summary of findings based on site visits to the Board of Trustees

### October 2023

- Invite input from community and staff on current and future library services with surveys to be made available online and in paper format. (Development of surveys will be a collaborative effort with Art Lersch and Erica Brewster of Wisconsin Valley Library Service)

### January 2024

- Present the Preliminary Service Responses and Goals to the Board of Trustees
- Present Summary report of input gathered from community and staff collected through the Space Needs Study facilitated by MSR Design and the local surveys to the Board of Trustees

### April 2024

- Present Preliminary Goals and Measurable Objectives to the Board of Trustees

### May 2024

- Presentation of Final Report to Library Board of Trustees for approval

# PLANNING PROCESS

## SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY

On January 18, 2023, discussions surrounding the 2204-2028 Strategic Plan took place at the Library's Board of Trustees meeting. This was followed by the inception of the Space Needs Study. MSR Design, Architecture firm from Minneapolis, MN, was contracted to facilitate the process.

In February 2023 focus group meetings were held with the public and library staff. A final report was presented to the Library Board in April 2023 with the recommendation for the addition of a meeting/activity room in the Youth Services Department.

In April 2023, library administration examined several sources of data and information about the library's existing services, including:

- Annual report data: All public libraries in the Wisconsin are required to submit an annual report to the Department of Public Instruction.
- Local demographic data and library comparative data prepared by Wisconsin Valley Library System.

In May 2023, library staff presented an outline for the Strategic Planning Process. A timeline and suggested tasks for completion of the plan were supplied. Two main areas of focus were identified: space utilization and community needs.

In June 2023, visits to comparable libraries were conducted and a summary of those visits was presented to the Library Board of Trustees at the September meeting.

At the September 2023 Board Meeting, the Library Administration Team presented a Library Demographic Review as part of the data gathering process which reviewed library usage and services.

In October 2023, a community survey was conducted by Library Administration with administrative support from Erica Brewster of the Wisconsin Valley Library Service and volunteer support from Art Lersch. A summary report of the feedback gathered was presented to the board at the January 2024 meeting.

In April 2024, the Library Administration Team presented proposed Goals with measurable Objectives.

In May 2024, the Library Administration Team presented the final report to the Library Board for approval.



# PLAN COMMUNICATION & IMPLEMENTATION

*To effectively communicate and share the strategic plan with key stakeholders and the wider community, the following strategies will be implemented:*

## 1. Summary of the plan for municipal partners

The library director will develop a summary of the strategic plan that highlights its key goals and action steps. This summary will be presented to the City of Merrill and other municipal partners. By providing an overview of the strategic plan, this summary will help ensure alignment and collaboration between the library and other local government entities.

## 2. Internal communication and staff assignments

The library director will update library staff on the strategic plan, sharing the goals and objectives outlined in the plan. The director will assign duties and responsibilities to staff members based on these goals, ensuring that everyone is aware of their role in implementing the plan. Clear communication within the library staff will help foster a shared understanding of the strategic plan and enhance coordination in achieving its objectives.

## 3. Website presence

The library will utilize its website as a platform to share the strategic plan with the community. A dedicated section or page on the library's website will provide detailed information about the plan's goals, objectives, and initiatives. The website will serve as a central hub for community members to access and learn about the library's strategic direction.



### Join the Friends of the Library

*Friends of the T.B. Scott Free Library is a support organization dedicated to making our library the best it can be.*

# PLAN ASSESSMENT

*To ensure effective implementation and continuous evaluation of the strategic plan, the following assessment strategies will be employed:*

## 1. Alignment with budgeting

Library administration will actively align the strategic plan goals with the library's budgeting process. During the budget-setting phase, consideration will be given to the strategic plan's priorities and allocate appropriate resources accordingly.

## 2. Progress updates

The Library Director will regularly update the Board of Trustees on the progress made in achieving these goals, ensuring transparency and accountability.

## 3. Stakeholder feedback

Engaging stakeholders through feedback mechanisms and surveys will be an integral part of the assessment process. The library will periodically gather input from community members, library staff, and other stakeholders to gauge their satisfaction with the library's services, programs, and overall progress towards the strategic plan goals. This feedback will help identify areas for improvement and inform adjustments to the plan, if needed.

