

Verona
Public Library

**The Future
is Today**

Strategic Plan
2021-2025

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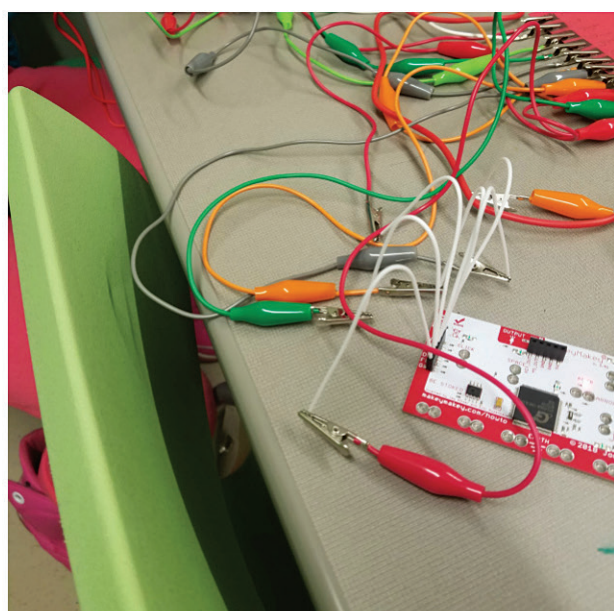
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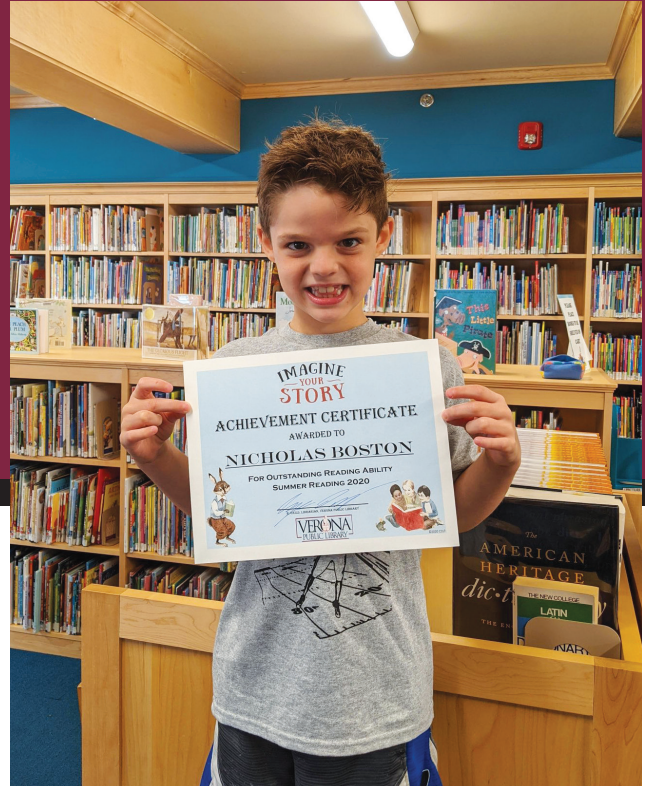
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Introduction



The Verona Public Library (VPL) has accomplished many significant projects during the last few years, including the following:

- A dynamic building design and implementation plan resulting in renovations and improvements throughout the entire library resulting in:
 - ▶ The addition of more than 4,376 square feet of new space and renovation of the entire facility
 - ▶ Installation of an elevator to improve patron accessibility to the second floor and basement level
 - ▶ Installation of new furniture, lighting, and carpeting throughout the building
 - ▶ Increased seating throughout the library
 - ▶ New space including a Teen Room and Maker Space on the main level, a conference room and tutoring space on the second floor, and a youth activity room on the basement level
- Expanded the digital collection and technology capabilities
 - ▶ Introduced new streaming platforms such as Hoopla, Kanopy and other audio/video collections
 - ▶ Updated the library's Wi-Fi/Broadband to allow for increased user traffic throughout the building
 - ▶ Offered Wi-Fi hotspots to patrons for use at home
- Offered new collections and services such as the Museum Pass Program
- Expanded community partnerships with local organizations



Shortly after its highly successful renovation and expansion project, the Verona Public Library began a strategic planning process to:

- 1) elicit community comments about the library and ideas for the future;
- 2) evaluate what other area libraries offer to their communities;
- 3) plan operational and program improvements to respond to suggestions and the community's changing needs;
- 4) position the library to serve future generations; and,
- 5) determine staffing, hours, policies and collections required to deliver the kind of service that Verona residents expect.

The World Has Changed

Soon after engaging residents and planners in discussions about the future of the library, the environment that we operate in changed. As a result, this plan has to create a public library that is flexible, relevant, and accessible in new ways and one that is considered an essential public service.

The disruption caused by the pandemic caused Verona's library planners to think differently about delivering library services when physical gatherings and sharing of physical things became undesirable. It also required staff to think about what residents will need most for the library now and in an environment that does not encourage in-person social gatherings, discourages sharing of physical things, and expects people to keep to a social distance. The question then, is how will the library provide resources, services and programs in the balance between digital and print resources, in person versus remote programs and services? This plan attempts to create that bridge between the past and the future by reimagining and transforming the library.

The Verona Public Library embraced these challenges during the spring of 2020 and delivered a spectrum of digital and virtual resources and programs, far greater than it ever had before. Our experiences during this time will assist us in transforming the library to achieve our goals and keep us from returning to our established comfort zones.





We Hear You

In focus groups and from an online/print survey we heard many ideas and suggestions regarding the future of the Verona Public Library as well as many positive responses about the new building. During this process we spoke with close to 800 people and engaged in conversations with many of the staff.

Response to the new library was overwhelmingly constructive and thoughtful. Community members told us that:

- They love the renovation and new spaces
- The addition of many more seats is welcome and the meeting spaces are appreciated
- Access to digital resources and devices could be expanded
- Parking-related issues should be addressed to increase ease of access to the library
- Physical collections should continue to be refreshed, especially in children's and teen areas with the addition of more new digital titles
- Library policies and services should be adapted to respond to demographic changes in Verona, including the increasing number of families where both parents work, more children and active seniors, and a growing, diverse population
- Increased community engagement should be encouraged through connecting residents with each other via programs and focused conversations and topical discussions
- Greater community awareness about the library's technology, collections, programs, facilities, and staff expertise is essential

¹ The report, "We Heard You", is available in the library, featuring comments and data from the survey and focus groups. A similar survey was conducted during the previous planning cycle in 2015 with a response of 365, versus 700 this time.

Vision

The Verona Public Library, an essential community resource, builds community physically and virtually, by bringing people of all ages and cultures together to read, learn, and engage with each other.

Mission

The Verona Public Library, the community's center for civic engagement, promotes literacy, advances knowledge, and enhances the quality of life for the community

Shared Values

The staff and Board of Trustees of the Verona Public Library actively embrace these values as the foundation for serving our community:

- We treat each other and all people with respect and dignity
- We believe that the library's primary role is in promoting debate, discussion, and discovery of ideas that improve people's lives
- We communicate with residents and all stakeholders with honesty
- We promote the library and its benefits, every day, to the surprise and delight of our community
- We hire and retain a talented and caring staff
- We encourage mutual partnerships with organizations in Verona to fulfill resident's expectations
- We conduct ourselves as thoughtful stewards of library resources and funds

Our Four Strategic Goals

1

All Verona residents will experience a welcoming and engaging physical and virtual library that offers a variety of opportunities for community engagement, enrichment and learning

2

Library customers will discover a dynamic collection of digital and print resources

3

Residents will receive engaging, clear and compelling messages from the library that encourage greater use

4

The Verona Public Library will position itself to serve the needs of current and future generations

Goal 1

All Verona residents will experience a welcoming and engaging physical and virtual library space that offers a variety of opportunities for community engagement and learning

Now that the library has been successfully renovated and expanded it needs to continually improve access to its resources and programs and create expanded capacity to provide new services. As resources, technology, collections, and services evolve, physical space will continue to change. The Verona Public Library will become the community's center for personal and community discovery.



Objectives

- A. Create irresistible on-site and online programming
- B. Continually monitor the use of library space and modify it as needed to create a highly flexible facility that meets changing needs
- C. Engage with the community beyond library walls
- D. Become Verona's center for digital fluency and close the digital divide
- E. Expand library volunteer opportunities
- F. Adopt policy and technological changes to enhance users' library experience
- G. Establish the library as the "go-to" place for children, teens and their families

Goal 2

Library customers will discover a dynamic collection of digital and print resources

We are proud of our collections. Residents expect the library to have materials that are topical and in demand. Survey respondents say that they come to the library for a book or a bestseller. The collections will be, refreshed, and reorganized to deliver an excellent library experience for all community members who read print or digital content.



Objectives

- A. Refresh the collection to anticipate community needs and interests
- B. Ensure the collection size and displays reflect the space available in the library and consider rapidly advancing digital trends

Goal 3

Residents will receive engaging clear and compelling messages from the library that encourages greater use



Verona Public Library serves Verona individuals and families in many ways. People have different experiences with the library. We want to ensure that all patrons, of all ages, are aware and excited by the library and take full advantage of all that we offer.

Objectives

- A. Engage in a consistent marketing effort
- B. Increase the library's ability to reach both our frequent patrons and the entire community



Goal 4

The Verona Public library will position itself to serve the needs of current and future generations



We are committed to creating a library that will be here for generations to come. We will continue to be good stewards of one of Verona's most important resources. The staff team and Board of Trustees are invested in the community and its success, committed to the library's vision and mission, and eager to lead. We are committed to evaluating our policies and practices often to ensure they are serving our needs.

Objectives

- A. Align the library board with the strategic plan's goals
- B. Align staff and resources with the new strategic goals and changed environment
- C. Review all existing practices for relevance
- D. Make planning for the future an ongoing activity
- E. Enhance current and create new revenue streams