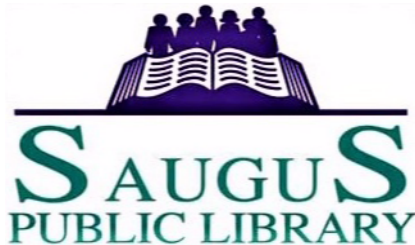


# SAUGUS PUBLIC LIBRARY



## STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FISCAL YEARS 2021–2025



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# Saugus Public Library Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2021–2025

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>                       | <b>3</b> |
| <b>OUR PROCESS .....</b>                       | <b>3</b> |
| <b>OUR RESULTS .....</b>                       | <b>4</b> |
| <b>OUR PLAN.....</b>                           | <b>6</b> |
| VISION STATEMENT .....                         | 6        |
| MISSION STATEMENT .....                        | 6        |
| GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.....                      | 6        |
| ACTION PLAN .....                              | 7        |
| MEASURING AND COMMUNICATING OUR PROGRESS ..... | 7        |
| <b>TRUSTEES’ APPROVAL .....</b>                | <b>8</b> |
| <b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>                  | <b>8</b> |
| <b>FINAL THOUGHTS .....</b>                    | <b>8</b> |
| <b>APPENDICES .....</b>                        | <b>9</b> |



## INTRODUCTION

The Saugus Public Library serves a community of 28,037 people living and working in the Greater Boston area. As the needs of its changing population continue to evolve, the Library strives to provide a diverse assortment of programs and services that add value to residents' lives.

Many of the Saugus Public Library's traditional offerings remain relevant and popular, like a physical collection of books, a diverse assortment of programs, and comfortable spaces to read, study, and work. However, the expectations of a public library's role in the community have evolved and expanded to include serving as a community hub—a centrally located, safe, and welcoming gathering place in which residents can be both educated and entertained.

To proactively address its community's changing needs, the Library spent several months developing a plan that identifies how it will allocate its finite resources over the next five years and beyond.



Saugus Public Library's *Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2021–2025* presents:

- An overview of the planning process;
- Vision and mission statements;
- Multi-year goals and objectives;
- A list of prioritized tactics (aka action plan); and
- Assorted appendices that present the results of all feedback solicitation activities.

We are pleased to present this dynamic plan and are excited to meet the aspirational goals it sets forth. Using the *Strategic Plan* as our guide, we believe the Saugus Public Library will remain be a critical, equalizing local resource that offers free access to interesting and fun programs, services, and resources well into the future.

## OUR PROCESS

In December 2018, the Library hired a strategic planning consultant, Barbara Alevras of Sage Consulting Services, to guide us through the planning process, facilitate a series of planning exercises, oversee the collection and analysis of performance data and community feedback, and assist with drafting the strategic plan document.

After establishing the project’s goals, we drafted a detailed planning process (see *Appendix A—Strategic Planning Process Flowchart*) that identified major project tasks, key stakeholders, and calendar milestones.

In the spring of 2019, the Library conducted a series of feedback solicitation exercises designed to assess its performance and identify future needs. These activities include:

- One Community Visioning Exercise;
- Three Strengths-Opportunity-Aspirations-Results (SOAR) Exercises;
- Two Surveys; and
- A Focus Group.

After collecting feedback, the data was analyzed, synthesized, and summarized in *Appendix B—SOAR Summary Results 2019*, *Appendix C—Community Survey Summary Report 2019*, and *Appendix D—Staff Survey Summary Report 2019*.

To complement the internal and external feedback we received, we compiled hard data related to community demographics and Library activity statistics. We identified trends, summarized the information collected, and incorporated it into a document that profiles the community and Library (see *Appendix E—Community and Library Profile 2019*).

We received a significant amount of feedback from almost 200 people. To review the target audience(s) and number of participants per feedback mechanism, please see *Appendix A—Strategic Planning Process Flowchart*.

## OUR RESULTS

Feedback received during the assessment phase of the planning project offered insights regarding the community’s perception of the Library’s current offerings and expectations for the future. Analyzing the input helped us identify major strengths and challenges and provided ideas for how the Library can meet the community’s needs going forward.





We were pleased to learn that the number one thing survey respondents and focus group participants liked most about the Library is the staff (*excellent, friendly, helpful*).

Additional positive feedback related to how the Library maintains a good facility (*convenient location, good children's room*); curates a good sized, diverse collection (*books, movies*); sponsors popular programs (*children's*); and offers miscellaneous valuable services (*ILL/Noblenet lending, homebound services*).

Many of these same topics appeared as areas in need of improvement and/or expansion. This is not unusual. Often, Library users value what's currently available, but also seek more, better, and/or newer offerings.

Potential new and enhanced initiatives suggested by the feedback collected relate to the following seven categories:

- **ADMINISTRATION** (staff, policies, and procedures): Requests for expanded operating hours, improved customer service, and increased staffing.
- **COLLECTIONS** (books, digital media, etc.): Interest in growing and diversifying the physical book, movie, and music collections, especially related to more current best sellers.
- **FACILITY** (physical space, furniture, layout): Requests for additional parking, reduced noise in the building, additional custodial attention, improved furniture/fixtures, enhanced interior appearance and configuration, and more study/meeting rooms.
- **MARKETING** (branding, communications): Calls for more community outreach, improved branding, and increased communications of the Library's value and offerings.
- **PROGRAMS** (activities and events): Interest in more programming for all ages, especially during non-working hours. Desire for diversity and multi-cultural focused programs. Numerous new program ideas submitted.
- **SERVICES**: Need expressed for more museum passes, increased support for local retirees, and basic business services (faxing, printing, etc.).
- **TECHNOLOGY**: Requests for more hardware (loaning of tech devices, add PCs in facility), additional technical skills tutorials, and expanded access to up-to-date technology.



As many specific general focus areas and ideas as possible were incorporated into the Library's *Strategic Plan* and its *Action Plan*.

Feedback results are available for review as appendices to this document (see *Appendices* on page 9). The target audience(s) and the number of participants per feedback mechanism are presented in *Appendix A—Strategic Planning Process Flowchart*.

## **OUR PLAN**

### **Vision Statement**

The Vision of the Saugus Public Library is to be the foremost destination for the intellectual and cultural growth and social engagement of all.

### **Mission Statement**

The Mission of the Saugus Public Library is to inform, enrich, and empower all citizens by providing and promoting free access to the universe of information and ideas.

### **Goals and Objectives**

Using the feedback results, vision statement, and mission statement as guiding principles, the Library developed an ambitious list of strategic goals and supporting objectives.

These goals and objectives address the needs expressed by the community and staff in the SOARs, focus group, and surveys. They stipulate how the Library plans to support its vision statement and mission statement and enables it to judiciously prioritize and allocate limited resources (funds, staff time, etc.) during the *Strategic Plan*'s term.

#### **GOAL 1: Provide an excellent facility.**

- 1.1 Offer a well maintained, accessible, and up-to-date interior.
- 1.2 Improve safety and accessibility of exterior spaces.
- 1.3 Meet diverse, evolving operational and user facility needs.

#### **GOAL 2: Provide easy access to Library resources and services.**

- 2.1 Expand access to Library programs and services.
- 2.2 Provide education and enrichment opportunities for all generations.
- 2.3 Grow and maintain diverse, current collections.



### **GOAL 3: Increase community awareness of Library offerings.**

- 3.1 Develop a comprehensive, consistent, and unified marketing presence in the community.
- 3.2 Increase the Library's visibility at local activities.
- 3.3 Ensure users understand how to access Library programs and services.

### **GOAL 4: Continually enhance Library administration, operations, and governance.**

- 4.1 Ensure continuous and efficient Library operations.
- 4.2 Consistently enforce Library policies and procedures.
- 4.3 Provide positive, helpful, and friendly customer service.

## **Action Plan**

Annually, the Library administration develops an *Action Plan* for the following fiscal year. The *Action Plan* presents a list of activities designed to help the Library achieve its goals and objectives. It itemizes new initiatives and tasks designed to support specific objectives. This tactical plan identifies new, finite initiatives and activities, but does not include ongoing operational or administrative tasks.

In the *Action Plan*, each activity is assigned to a staff member and includes a target date for completion. This helps ensure there is accountability and that progress can be monitored. To accommodate internal and external changes, the *Action Plan* is a “living document.” It is designed to be flexible enough to accommodate revisions as needed to respond to evolving needs and resource fluctuations.

To complement this *Strategic Plan*, a document presenting the strategic goals, supporting objectives, new projects, and associated tasks for Fiscal Years 2021 through 2025 is presented as *Appendix F—Saugus Public Library Goals-Objectives-Projects-Tasks for Fiscal Years 2021-2025*.

## **Measuring and Communicating Our Progress**

To ensure steady progress towards achieving the *Strategic Plan*'s goals, the Library Director will review the progress made towards achieving the *Strategic Plan*'s goals and objectives quarterly, including identifying completed *Action Plan* tasks.

Quarterly, the Library Director will report to the Board of Library Trustees on progress made towards achieving the *Strategic Plan*'s goals and objectives. The Director will provide quarterly updates to the staff, as well. In addition, the Director will include strategic plan performance highlights from the calendar year in his annual Town Report.

The *Strategic Plan* will be available on the Library's website.

## **TRUSTEES' APPROVAL**

On September 12, 2019, Saugus Public Library's six-person Board of Trustees approved this *Strategic Plan* unanimously.

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Michael Sullivan, Chair (2018-2021)**  
**Roseann Luongo, Vice Chair (2019-2022)**  
**Debra Dion-Faust, Secretary (2017-2020)**  
**Laura Flynn (2019-2022)**  
**Naomi Handler (2017-2020)**  
**Gail Murray (2018-2021)**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

During the strategic planning initiative's nine-month term, hundreds of people contributed countless hours and significant amounts of feedback to helping the Library develop its *Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2021–2025*.

We are grateful to everyone who contributed in even the smallest way to preparing this plan. We would especially like to thank Michael Sullivan and Gail Murray of our Board of Trustees for acting as the Steering Committee for the planning process. They generously gave their free time and considerable talents to produce a plan that is both ambitious and achievable. We are likewise grateful for the excellent work of Barbara Alevras, PMP, of Sage Consulting Services, who facilitated practically all aspects of the process and final production of the plan itself.

### **COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS**

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### **JOINT BOARDS S.O.A.R. EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS**

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Debra Dion Faust (Trustees)  
Laura Flynn (Trustees)  
Pauline Gautreau (New Friends)  
Pamela Gill (New Friends)  
Naomi Handler (Trustees)  
Ed Jeffrey (Foundation)  
Janis Long (New Friends)  
Roseann Luongo (Trustees)  
Gail Murray (Trustees)  
Michael Sullivan (Trustees)

## **FINAL THOUGHTS**

The strategic planning process we used over these past months brings us to where we are today. The result of this examination, input, and planning is a roadmap to the future for this library and community. We will work hard to faithfully execute this plan over the next five years. However, this cannot be a static document. As events unfold, circumstances may well present new opportunities that may cause us to re-evaluate our plans and adjust our course so we can take advantage of them.



## APPENDICES

***Appendix A—Strategic Planning Process Flowchart:*** The flowchart visually depicts the Library’s planning methodology, including the timeline, assessment mechanisms, and process participants.

***Appendix B—SOAR Summary Results 2019:*** This report documents the results of an environmental assessment of Saugus Public Library’s strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results.

***Appendix C—Community Survey Summary Report 2019:*** The community survey was conducted for three weeks in April 2019 via SurveyMonkey. Raw data and narrative comments are presented in addition to summary graphs and charts.

***Appendix D—Staff Survey Summary Report 2019:*** Library staff participated in a survey in March 2019. Raw data and narrative comments are presented in addition to summary graphs and charts.

***Appendix E—Community and Library Profile 2019:*** This document presents a demographic profile of Saugus, the Library’s history, and statistics related to the Library’s services and programs.

***Appendix F—Saugus Public Library Goals-Objectives-Projects-Tasks for Fiscal Years 2021-2025:*** This document presents the Library’s goals, objectives, projects, and associated tasks for Fiscal Years 2021-2025.

