

PLAN OF SERVICE 2026-2030



medicine hat
public library

INTRODUCTION

To create this Plan of Service, we spoke to hundreds of residents about what they wanted from the Library. We learned that we are valued by those who use our services. We also found that many in our community do not use the Library yet. We believe our services can benefit more residents, and we are committed to serving more people.

To reach more Hatters, we must be present in more neighbourhoods. A second full service location is not within our reach at this time, but we can still be in more places. Our Big Marble Go Centre location is one example of efficient neighbourhood presence. We will find ways to deliver services in convenient locations.

This Plan of Service presents our vision and aspirations for the next five years:

- to expand the reach of our services,
- to support more residents in more ways, and
- to connect more people and groups.

Medicine Hat Public Library is more than just books — it is a free, open community hub that connects people; reduces isolation and social division; and helps people access the services, support, and resources they need to thrive.



MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

MISSION STATEMENT

The Medicine Hat Public Library serves as a community hub, providing equitable and convenient access to books, media, information, and programs that help to educate, enrich, entertain, and inform its users.

VISION STATEMENT

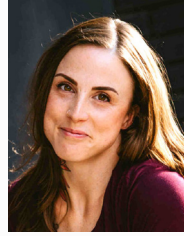
The Medicine Hat Public Library is a valued resource, fostering lifelong learning and enhancing the vitality of the community now and into the future.

VALUES

- ◆ Equitable access and inclusion
- ◆ Freedom of information
- ◆ Reconciliation
- ◆ Lifelong learning
- ◆ Intellectual freedom
- ◆ Connecting community

COMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION

The Library is committed to reconciliation, a renewed connection between Indigenous, settler, and immigrant peoples and cultures. We will reflect on history and learn from stories; consult with Indigenous Elders, knowledge keepers, and agencies; acknowledge the people who first inhabited our land at meetings and events; adjust our policies and services to welcome Indigenous people; and include Indigenous stories, histories, and cultures.



Board members from top left: Shandra Beaulieu, Inez Brady-Halaska, Simone Harty, Megan Hilgendorf, M.B. Kaethler, Peter Mueller, Tanya Ridgedale, Ramona Robins, Nathan Vanderham, Juanita Whalen.

HOW WE PLANNED

Before drafting this plan, the Board and Library staff members conducted a community needs assessment, including in-person interviews, an online survey, and a World Cafe focus group. We connected with over 450 people. The following themes emerged:

- ◆ The Library should supercharge its role in the community, given residents' financial challenges, a general desire for more social connection, and ongoing issues with access.
- ◆ The Library needs to expand geographically in order to address present and ongoing barriers for patrons.
- ◆ The Library should reach out to underrepresented and diverse groups to intentionally support these communities and provide knowledge transfer between cultures and generations in the community at large.
- ◆ The Library has to prioritize its function as a community hub by establishing opportunities for its patrons to develop social connections and provide service to their community.

STRATEGIC GOALS: 2026-2030

Based upon our community needs assessment, including both in-person and online surveys; a focus group; a survey of our staff; previous patron satisfaction surveys; and external community data and reports, the following three strategic goals were established by the Board:

EXPANSION

The Library will address barriers to access by expanding geographically.

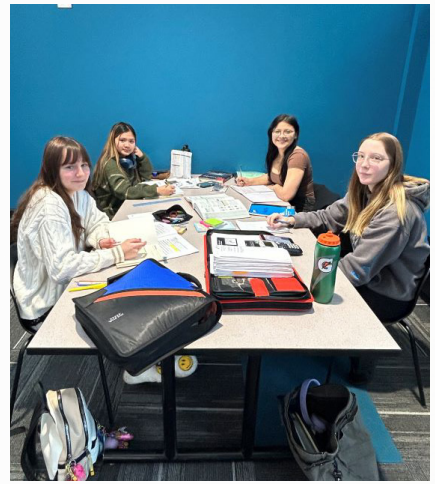
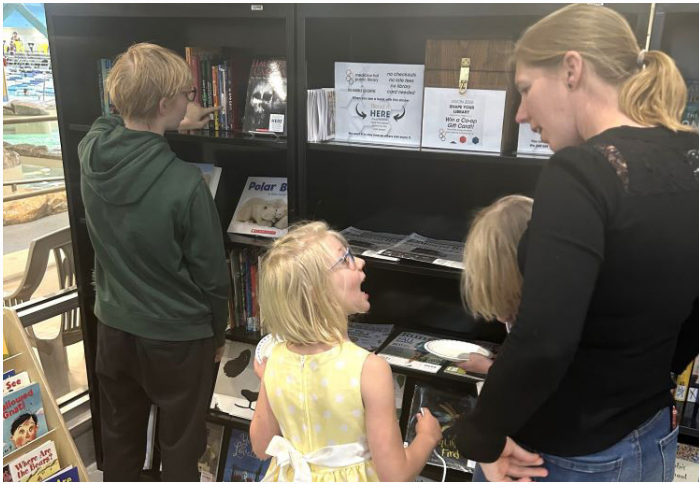
SUPPORT

The Library will maintain a welcoming space for everyone.

CONNECTION

The Library will enhance its role as a community hub by creating connections and liaising between generations, cultures, and people.





EXPANSION

The Library will address barriers to access by expanding geographically.



Objectives

- ◆ The Library will explore other locations in the city for drop-off and pick-up services to ensure residents have multiple options to access physical materials.
- ◆ The Library will provide and, whenever possible, create physical spaces that welcome our diverse users.
- ◆ The Library will maintain its electronic catalogue in fiscally responsible ways that prioritize a diverse selection of materials.

Desired Outcome

Medicine Hat residents will experience improved access to library services regardless of where they live in the city.





SUPPORT

The Library will maintain a welcoming space for everyone.



Objectives

- ◆ The Library will reach out to diverse, underserved, and underrepresented groups to offer supports in programming, community building, and events.
- ◆ The Library will provide a space where users can access free or low-cost programming and events to address affordability as a barrier to community engagement.
- ◆ The Library will offer opportunities to connect with community organizations and knowledge about how to access services.
- ◆ The Library will seek to address gaps in activities, particularly through organizing (inter)generational and (inter)cultural events.

Desired Outcome

Diverse, underserved, and underrepresented groups will find open and welcoming spaces as well as affordable programs that meet their unique needs.





CONNECTION

The Library will enhance its role as a community hub by creating connections and liaising between generations, cultures, and people.



Objectives

- ◆ The Library will host community events for people that offer opportunities for knowledge transfer and entertainment.
- ◆ The Library will update its resources, such as the website, to enhance community connections and awareness.
- ◆ The Library will reach out where possible to make connections with diverse community groups.
- ◆ The Library will facilitate club and social mixers for diverse and intergenerational communities.
- ◆ The Library will continue our commitment to reconciliation.

Desired Outcome

Community members will have enhanced opportunities to build meaningful relationships and connections across generations and cultures.



CONCLUSION

This Plan of Service envisions the Library as a supercharged community hub. The Library enhances the city's well-being by reducing barriers, connecting people, and helping every resident thrive.

The Board is thankful to its staff for their support and input in shaping this new plan of service, but it also wants to recognize that a significant number of community surveys identified the Library staff as one of its main assets. Thank you for every little thing you do that matters so much to the members of our community.

To our community, thank you for taking the time to respond to the various surveys, to partake in the focus group, or to give your feedback to the library over the past five years. Your contributions have helped to shape this plan of service, and it is an honour to serve you and our beautiful city.

A library is its books, its resources, its programs, and many things, but above all, the library is its people. Thank you!



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