



# Port Townsend Public Library Strategic Plan 2021-2025

Updated for 2021 | Adopted December 7, 2020



**The Port Townsend  
Public Library is  
dedicated to:**

*Uplifting our  
community through  
reading, learning,  
connection, and  
creativity.*

**And ensuring**

*A thriving community  
for all.*

# Acknowledgments

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## Special Thanks

A special thank you to the numerous Port Townsend community members and stakeholder agencies who provided their time and thoughtful ideas to help the City create this Library Strategic Plan in 2020.

## For More Information

For more information on the partner organizations and terminology referenced in this document, please see the Library's website: [ptpubliclibrary.org](http://ptpubliclibrary.org).

## PLANNING CONTEXT

**The Port Townsend Public Library (PTPL) is truly *Port Townsend's library*.** Its staff, collections, programs, historic Carnegie and Charles Pink House buildings are custom tailored for the unique community it serves. Port Townsend values its small town feel and sense of a community; loves the arts, creativity, history, and the sea; supports learning at all ages; and has an economy based on tourism and, increasingly, local self-reliance. This Strategic Plan gives us direction for how to continue to be the best library for Port Townsend over the coming five years.

**Just as PTPL is shaped by its community, this plan is shaped by the particular time we are in.** As this plan is written, we are in the midst of a major public health crisis, on the slow path to recovery. Financial challenges that were already affecting the City of Port Townsend have been exacerbated, inspiring Engage PT, a community-wide conversation about how to focus a constrained City budget, and encourage public participation in Citywide initiatives. Public attention is focused on tackling systemic racism and climate change; promoting social, economic, and environmental justice, and providing equitable access to resources for all community members.

**We are grateful for our assets and mindful of our constraints.** PTPL is fortunate to have the support of the community, expressed both in recent engagement activities and in the passage of a levy lid lift in 2008 that created a dedicated source for library operations. As generous as this is, this funding is constrained in two significant ways. The revenues it generates does not increase with inflation and so the library's purchasing power is eroding over time. Currently all levy funds are necessary to fund library operations and there are questions about whether the levy can be used to fund capital improvements. Further programmatic outreach or any increased services will be dependent on staffing and service models. Currently, the library is at maximum capacity for maintaining day-to-day operations, which leaves offerings status quo for now.

*Given the economic hardships faced by community members and the City overall, we will not ask for additional public operating support during the five years covered by this plan. We will live within our means and work with the City, our Friends and Foundation, and other partners to manage existing resources and leverage creative funding opportunities.*



*“Waterfront with Kayak” photo credit Ashley Courter.*

## PLAN STRUCTURE AND FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION

**In the midst of current challenges, we remain hopeful.** This Strategic Plan is calibrated to be both pragmatic, grounded in short-term realities, and aspirational, looking beyond current constraints. Engagement activities conducted as a part of this planning process captured what is most important to community members: our collections, staff, and space. We also heard a desire for more: more community connections; more programs and resources beyond the walls of the library; and more of a focus on what makes Port Townsend, and Port Townsend Public Library, unique.

This Strategic Plan names the Library's **Vision, Mission, Core Services, and Assets and Resources**. We will stay true to these, leveraging them to advance four **Strategic Initiatives** designed to strengthen our ability to serve the Port Townsend community. These elements are durable and will guide us through 2025 and perhaps beyond.

Each year, in concert with annual reviews on a citywide basis, we will use this guidance to identify current special projects, with related ideas for the future indicating where we may go in subsequent years. In an annual cycle, Library staff will work with the Library Advisory Board, City leadership, and our partners to reflect on our progress and establish priorities and our budget for the coming year. Annually the staff will identify meaningful measures by which to track deliverables, outcomes, and build success.



*Carnegie Library illustration by Diane Mayers.*

## OUR VISION AND MISSION

We share the **City of Port Townsend's** Vision of:

**A thriving**

*with access to resources for learning, relaxing, and expressing creativity.*

**community**

*founded on our ability to connect to one another, by design and by accident, in person and online.*

**for all.**

*includes full access for everyone, without barriers.*

The individuals and organizations of the Port Townsend community must work together to achieve this Vision, each according to their ability, focus, and resources. For its part:

**The Library's Mission is:**

*Uplifting our community through reading, learning, connection, and creativity.*

## OUR STRATEGY

We will prioritize the delivery of the Library's Core Services: **Collections, Programs and Events, Staff Expertise, and Access to Technology**. Our community relies on us for these services, by providing spaces to house collections, offering friendly and expert customer service, hosting programs and events, and creating opportunities for connection, and we will deliver.

**We will steward our assets and resources**, including our financial resources and beautiful Carnegie building.

**We will amplify our impact through partnerships** with our Friends, Foundation, Cooperative Libraries of the Eastern Olympics (CLEO), and local and regional organizations. Our community desires more than we can provide on our own, so these relationships are essential to achieving our Mission.



**We will use our Core Services, partnerships, assets, and resources to continue to advance four Strategic Initiatives** designed to help us be the best possible library for the Port Townsend community:

- 1. Increase equitable access to library offerings to serve all Port Townsend residents and visitors according to their needs, interests, and abilities.**
- 2. Build community as a trusted convener and connector, both within and beyond library walls.**
- 3. Help our Port Townsend community learn, do, create, and share.**
- 4. Make efficient and effective use of local and regional resources.**

Tactics for implementing these Initiatives in 2021, as well as some ideas for the future are presented on the following pages. Initial Measures of Success are listed for 2021, with the expectation that these will evolve over time to include specified targets and a mix of outputs and outcomes. As noted on the pages that follow, 2021 will serve to establish a baseline and methods of gathering ongoing measurement data.

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

### 1. Increase equitable access to library offerings to serve all Port Townsend residents and visitors according to their needs, interests, and abilities.

#### In 2021

- Explore options for enhancing and expanding our collections, including strategies to improve easy access to digital resources and make creative use of Library and public spaces to house programs and collections.
- Raise awareness of what we have to offer, where we have limitations, and where we can connect to partner resources.
- Develop a creative method for identifying resources and programs that are provided by PTPL, including those provided through partnership with others.
- Enhance opportunities for serendipitous discovery, even if access to the building continues to be limited.
- Create a simple quick annual customer satisfaction survey with consistent questions to be able to measure changes over time.
- Evaluate current services such as: staff development; access to technology, ADA; Books on Wheels, to establish a baseline.

#### Measures of Success

In 2021 we will establish baseline measures, tools, and targets for future years. Measures will include:

- Items in our collection.
- Total circulation and circulation statistics over time.
- Percent of the Port Townsend community who are active library card users.
- Percent of respondents to the customer satisfaction survey expressing satisfaction with Library collections.

#### Ideas for 2022-2025 and Beyond

- Engage underserved populations and neighborhoods in the community and identify their needs and desires for library services.
- Build on what we've learned about new user desires and continue to balance traditional services with ideas for drawing in new patrons.
- Initiate community conversations to continually connect with the community and promote library services.
- Explore options for pop-up library services and convenient pick up and drop off locations.
- Create a Services Improvement and Efficiencies Plan from the established baselines in 2021.

## 2. Build community as a trusted convener and connector, both within and beyond Library walls.

### In 2021

- Sponsor safe outdoor or online meeting and event/program spaces if restrictions on indoor gatherings continue.
- Work with the Friends and Foundation to secure stakeholder advocacy and financial support for programs and outreach.

### Measures of Success

In 2021 we will establish baseline measures, tools, and targets for future years. Measures will include:

- Number of events held in the Library and elsewhere in the community.
- Attendance at and increased demand for programs.
- Positive feedback from event participants gathered through a simple immediate feedback tool.
- Percent of respondents to the customer satisfaction survey expressing overall satisfaction with the Library.

### Ideas for 2022-2025 and Beyond

- Extend library programs into the community.
- Facilitate access to physical and virtual meeting spaces.
- Evaluate library programs and outreach activities to identify equity and access challenges. Use this baseline assessment to inform a future Program & Outreach Plan.
- Develop an annual Program & Outreach Plan, including more developed Measures of Success with a focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion.



Left: Sing-A-Ling with Keith Apgar at the Library, photo credit Hilary Verheggen. Right: Community Read 2018 with Leif Whittaker at Port Townsend High School, photo credit Leif Whittaker and Freya Fennwood.



### 3. Help our Port Townsend community learn, do, create, and share.

#### In 2021

- Map and formalize our partnerships to leverage community resources.
- Build on existing collaboration with the Port Townsend School District in the COVID/post-COVID reality through programs like “Lunch at Your Library” and supporting their place-based learning.
- Continue creative services like “Take and Make Bags,” “Grab Bags,” and the “Unusual Items to Check Out” collection.

#### Measures of Success

In 2021 we will establish baseline measures, tools, and targets for future years. Measures will include:

- Number of active partnerships.
- Number of programs and events delivered by the Library and its partners.
- Attendance at and increased demand for creative programs.
- Percent of respondents to the customer satisfaction survey expressing satisfaction with Library programs and events.
- Positive feedback from event participants gathered through a simple immediate feedback tool.
- Increased demand for relevant programs and events.

#### Ideas for 2022-2025 and Beyond

- Showcase local creative works in partnership with other community organizations.
- Offer local history and tell local stories in our collections in partnership with local organizations.
- Feature more indigenous history, stories, and programs in partnership with local Tribes.
- Circulate tools, technology, and other means to do, create, and share.



Left: Git-Hoan Dancers at Jefferson County Library, photo credit Russ Stamp. Right: Children's Choir at the library, photo credit Phina Pippia.

## 4. Make efficient and effective use of local and regional resources.

### In 2021

- Serve as a hub for Engage PT and other current City initiatives.
- Plan Library All Staff Day 2021 in-person or virtual.
- Assemble and prioritize the Library's maintenance and capital improvement needs.
- Update the Library's staffing plan to best serve community priorities and work within the Library's current operating budget.
- Collaborate with the Friends and Foundation to prioritize resources for capital needs and collections in line with community priorities.

### Measures of Success

In 2021 we will establish baseline measures, tools, and targets for future years. Measures will include:

- Interlibrary circulation statistics within CLEO.
- Percent of respondents to the customer satisfaction survey agreeing that the Library is a good steward of public resources.
- Percent of respondents to the customer satisfaction survey expressing overall satisfaction with the Library.
- Increased Friends and Foundation resources for collections and programs.

### Ideas for 2022-2025 and Beyond

- Invest in staff development to meet evolving service needs aligned with this Strategic Plan.
- Work with the City to establish a plan to address long-term capital needs and aging physical infrastructure.
- Explore funding for historical preservations and capital improvements.
- Research long-term options for establishing a sustainable operating budget aligned with community expectations.
- Explore long-term options for establishing sustainable funding for the City's maintenance and capital improvements to the Library and Pink House.



*Engage PT is a yearly campaign – a clear, coordinated, and consolidated approach to community-led, integrated decision-making.*