

Auburn Public Library

Strategic Plan for

Fiscal Years 2026-2030





Auburn Public Library - Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2026-2030

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INTRODUCTION

The Auburn Public Library's Strategic Plan sets a thoughtful and positive direction for the next five years, covering Fiscal Years 2026 through 2030.

Developing a strategic plan brings meaningful benefits to both the Library and its broader community. It helps establish shared priorities, guides decision-making, supports the wise use of resources, and provides a clear way to measure progress. Most importantly, it provides the Library with a structured pathway to grow and improve its offerings, ensuring they continue to reflect what community members value and need.

This planning effort was truly collaborative. The Board of Trustees played a key role throughout the process, offering insight, partnership, and leadership as the plan developed. Their involvement complemented the perspectives shared by Library staff, the Friends of the Auburn Public Library, and community members who took part in focus groups, surveys, SOAR exercises, and conversations.

Community members consistently highlighted the Library's welcoming environment, knowledgeable staff, and reliable services, while also expressing enthusiasm for expanded programs, refreshed spaces, enhanced technology, and deeper community partnerships.

As the Library looks toward 2030, this plan provides a positive, collaborative, and community-informed roadmap for strengthening services, embracing innovation, and ensuring that the Auburn Public Library remains a welcoming, trusted, and essential resource for everyone it serves.

OUR PROCESS

Auburn Public Library launched its ten-month strategic planning process in March 2025 after hiring Strategic Planning Consultant Barbara Alevras of Sage Consulting Services to guide and support the work. The Library undertook this process to better understand community needs, strengthen long-term decision-making, and position the organization for thoughtful growth over the next five years.

This plan was developed with guidance from the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee (SPAC), a fourteen-member group representing diverse community perspectives. Library staff, the Board of Trustees, Friends of the Auburn Public Library, and community members contributed insights through a series of community feedback activities. Their input revealed what the community values most, the challenges they see ahead, and the opportunities they want the Library to pursue.

Throughout the process, the Library gathered a mix of subjective and objective data to ensure we captured well-rounded insights. Subjective feedback was collected through two adult focus groups, one teen focus group, a community survey completed by 381 respondents, and two SOAR Analyses. Staff also completed an internal survey, and trustees and Friends of the Auburn Public Library board members participated in a separate survey tailored to their perspectives.

Library staff, trustees, and Friends board members participated in the SOAR analyses, which helped assess the Library's strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and the results (progress and performance metrics) most meaningful for the future. The staff SOAR session was facilitated by a Massachusetts Library System (MLS) consultant. Barbara Alevras facilitated the SOAR exercise for the trustees and Friends board members. This feedback activity provided an objective, structured lens on the Library's internal environment.

The Library's SPAC developed a set of vision statements describing an ideal future for Auburn. These three statements reflect the aspirations SPAC members believe the Library is uniquely positioned to make a meaningful positive impact in the years ahead.

Appendix F—APL Community Vision Statement Report 2025 presents the full community visioning exercise results.

In addition to community feedback, the Auburn Public Library compiled objective, quantitative data to better understand community and library trends.

This "hard data," which includes demographic, usage, circulation, budget, and program statistics, is presented in detail in *Appendix G—Auburn Public Library Fiscal Year 2025* and *Appendix L—Town of Auburn Profile* and serves as an important complement to the qualitative input gathered from stakeholders.

Together, these data sources enabled the Library to develop a strategic plan grounded in community voices, actionable insights, and a comprehensive understanding of current and future needs.

Additional details regarding the Library's strategic planning process can be viewed in *Appendix A—Strategic Planning Project Process Map 2025*.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROJECT 2025

An overview of the Auburn Public Library's Strategic Planning Process.

STEP 1. DEVELOP PROJECT PLAN



STEP 2. ASSESS STATUS AND ID COMMUNITY NEEDS



STEP 3. SYNTHESIZE AND SUMMARIZE ALL DATA



STEP 4. DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENTS & DOCUMENT



STEP 5. TRUSTEES APPROVE STRATEGIC PLAN



STEP 6. SUBMIT STRATEGIC PLAN TO MBLC



WHAT WE LEARNED

The strategic planning process confirmed that Auburn Public Library is a trusted, well-loved community resource with strong internal leadership and a reputation for exceptional service. Through surveys, focus groups, SOAR analyses, and operational data, several themes emerged that clarify both the Library's strengths and the opportunities ahead.

- 1. The Library's welcoming environment and dedicated staff are core strengths.**
Community members consistently praised staff for being friendly, helpful, and committed. Staff, trustees, and Friends also expressed strong alignment and pride in their work. This reinforces that people are at the heart of APL's success and highlights the importance of maintaining morale and supporting ongoing professional development.
- 2. Growing community demand requires increased staff capacity and modern, flexible space.**
Across stakeholder groups, participants voiced the need for more programs, more diverse offerings, and improved spaces, especially meeting rooms, study areas, and an updated Children's Room. These insights highlight the importance of long-term space planning and staffing strategies in keeping pace with rising expectations and usage.
- 3. Outreach, visibility, and communication are essential to strengthening engagement.**
Many residents are interested in learning more about APL's programs, services, and digital resources. Both the community and internal stakeholders stressed the importance of more proactive outreach and marketing. This learning highlights the importance of a stronger communications strategy to increase awareness and participation.
- 4. Access to technology and digital learning continue to be key community needs.**
Participants requested improved access to technology, device availability, and digital skills support. Paired with staff interest in staying current with emerging tools, this signals the importance of continued investment in technology infrastructure, training, and digital services.
- 5. Equity, inclusion, and changing community demographics must shape future priorities.**
Community members and staff noted Auburn's evolving demographics and the opportunity to ensure services, collections, and programs reflect the full community. This insight underscores the importance of expanding inclusive offerings and forming partnerships that cater to diverse audiences.
- 6. Strong governance and stable funding are advantages that can support future growth.**
The SOAR analysis identified APL's positive reputation, stable funding, and leadership alignment as major strengths. These assets position the Library well to pursue expanded services, new partnerships, and long-term facility improvements.
- 7. Stakeholders aspire to a more dynamic, future-ready library.**
Participants described a vision of APL as a vibrant hub of learning, creativity, innovation, and connection. This aspiration reinforces the importance of strategic investments in programs, outreach, technology, and space to deliver meaningful results—higher participation, deeper engagement, and stronger community impact.

These findings provided a clear foundation for defining the Library's future direction. Together, they shaped the development of the Library's community vision statement, mission statement, organizational vision statement, and strategic goals. The following section presents these guiding elements, which reflect what we heard from the community and chart a path for the Library's growth over the next five years.



OUR PLAN

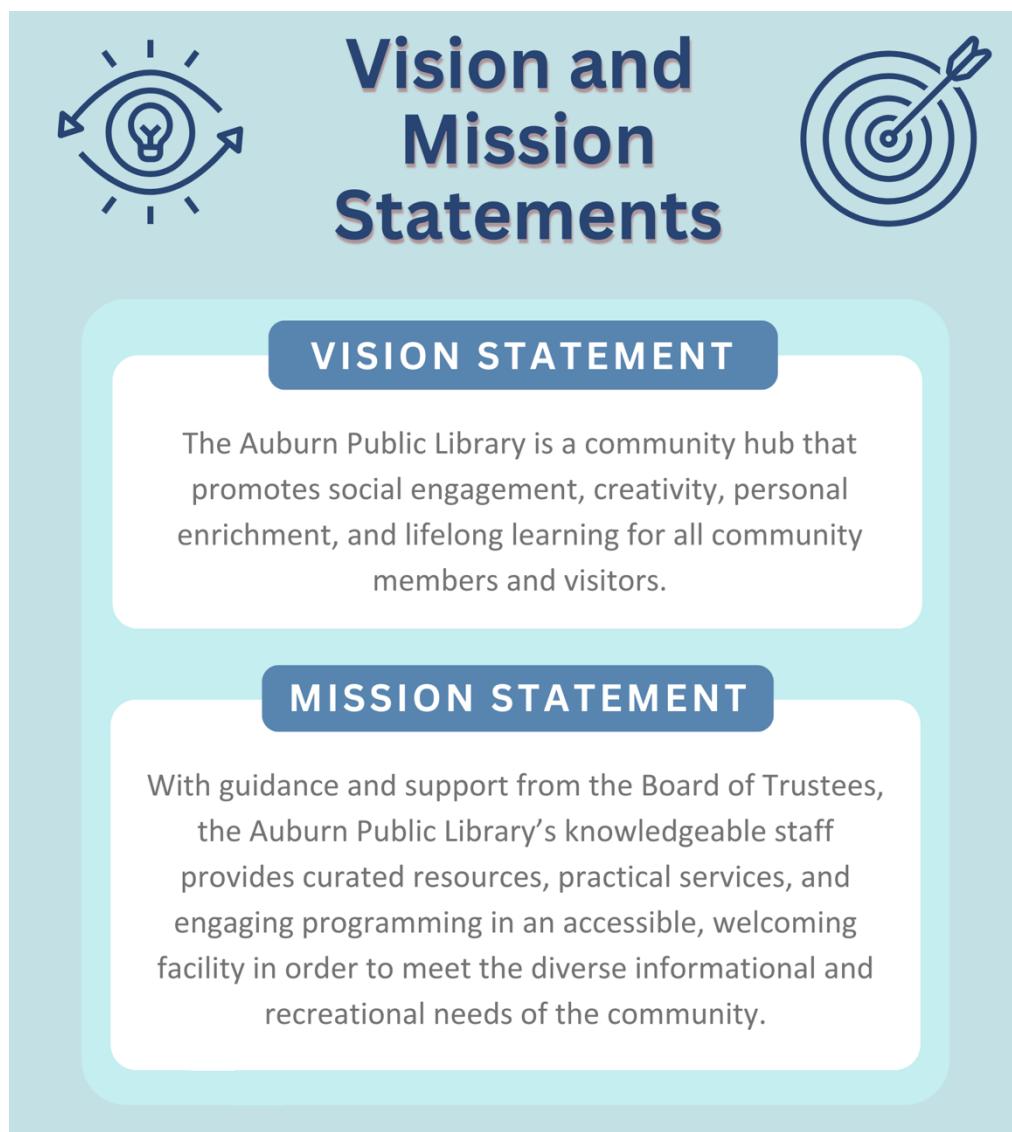
The following section presents the core elements that will guide Auburn Public Library's work over the next five years. These components reflect what we learned throughout the strategic planning process and translate the community's priorities into a clear direction for the future. Together, these guiding statements form the foundation for the Library's growth and improvement in the years ahead.

Vision Statement

The vision statement describes the future the Library strives to create as a welcoming, forward-thinking resource for all who live, work, and learn in Auburn.

Mission Statement

The mission statement defines the Library's core purpose and the essential role it plays in supporting learning, connection, and opportunity for the community.



VISION STATEMENT

The Auburn Public Library is a community hub that promotes social engagement, creativity, personal enrichment, and lifelong learning for all community members and visitors.

MISSION STATEMENT

With guidance and support from the Board of Trustees, the Auburn Public Library's knowledgeable staff provides curated resources, practical services, and engaging programming in an accessible, welcoming facility in order to meet the diverse informational and recreational needs of the community.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

These goals and objectives outline Auburn Public Library's priorities for the next five years and the actions that will guide its growth, services, and community engagement.

GOAL STATEMENT 1

Strengthen community connections and awareness of the Library's value so that all Auburn residents, of every age and background, see the Library as a central hub for learning, creativity, and connection.

Supporting Objectives:

1. Build and strengthen partnerships with schools, senior centers, and local organizations to expand and diversify participation in library programs and initiatives.
2. Develop outreach strategies to connect with community members, especially new residents, non-users, and underserved populations.
3. Gather community feedback regularly to inform programs and services that reflect local needs.
4. Develop and implement a comprehensive and consistent branding, marketing, and communications plan.
5. Strengthen the Library's online presence, including website and social media engagement.

GOAL STATEMENT 2

Deliver a diverse range of programs, services, and experiences that inspire curiosity, support lifelong learning, and reflect the varied interests and needs of all community members.

Supporting Objectives:

1. Fully incorporate attendance and community feedback data into program planning and evaluation process.
2. Utilize circulation statistics, patron feedback and library best practices to further develop library collection.
3. Develop program and collection offerings that represent and engage community members with diverse generational, cultural and experiential interests and needs.
4. Develop digital collections and strategies for promoting digital literacy.
5. Strengthen teen engagement through dedicated programming and volunteer opportunities.

GOAL STATEMENT 3

Enhance and expand the Library's physical spaces to create welcoming, flexible, and accessible environments that support community building, creativity, learning, and exploration.

Supporting Objectives:

1. Assess current space usage and identify and execute on opportunities to expand and reconfigure public areas.
2. Improve accessibility, lighting, and signage throughout the facility.
3. Create flexible spaces that can adapt for meetings, programs, and quiet study.
4. Plan and advocate for long-term facility improvements that meet community growth needs.
5. Deploy technology to enhance user experience, staff productivity and accessibility.

GOAL STATEMENT 4

Grow and sustain a skilled, motivated, happy, and effectively staffed team that delivers exceptional library service that continuously meets the community's evolving needs.

Supporting Objectives:

1. Develop and maintain a thorough staffing plan designed to ensure workplace efficiency and equity.
2. Ensure staffing levels exceed library baseline service demands.
3. Provide ongoing professional development and cross-training opportunities for staff.
4. Foster a supportive, collaborative work environment that values staff input and creativity.

GOAL STATEMENT 5

Secure the Library's future through strategic advocacy, transparent stewardship, and diversified funding to steadily expand and enhance services, staff, and facility improvements.

Supporting Objectives:

1. Collaborate with the Town and Trustees to advocate for consistent and sufficient funding.
2. Pursue grant opportunities and alternative revenue streams to supplement municipal funding.
3. Communicate the Library's impact through data, stories, and annual reporting to advocate for consistent and sufficient library funding.
4. Encourage community participation in fundraising and advocacy efforts, in collaboration with the Friends.
5. Establish and deliver consistent and transparent procedures for budget-related reporting to the Town and Trustees.

Annual Action Plans

Each year, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners requires libraries to submit an Action Plan to remain eligible for state grant funding. The Auburn Public Library will prepare this plan annually to outline the activities, timelines, and responsible team members who will advance the goals and objectives outlined in this Strategic Plan. This annual process helps the Library ensure that its day-to-day activities remain focused on achieving the strategic plan's priorities while adapting to the community's evolving needs.

Measuring and Communicating Our Progress

Auburn Public Library will monitor its progress by reviewing data and feedback that reflect how well the Library is meeting community needs. This includes looking at program participation, circulation and digital use, technology access, partnerships, and overall community engagement. Every six months, the Library Director will review these indicators with staff and the Board of Library Trustees to understand what is working, where adjustments may be helpful, and how the Library can continue to strengthen its services.

To keep residents informed, the Library will share updates with the community at least once a year through its website, annual report, and other public communications. These updates will highlight the Library's accomplishments, evolving needs, and the steps it is taking to advance the goals outlined in this strategic plan.

PLAN APPROVAL

On January 5, 2026, the Library's six-member Board of Trustees unanimously approved this *Strategic Plan*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Auburn Public Library extends its sincere appreciation to everyone who contributed to the creation of this Strategic Plan. The Library's staff, Board of Trustees, Friends of the Auburn Public Library board members, and Strategic Planning Advisory Committee offered thoughtful guidance and essential feedback throughout the process.

We are also grateful to the many community members who shared their perspectives through focus groups and surveys, as well as the volunteers who continue to support the Library in countless ways. Your collective input helped shape a plan rooted in Auburn's needs, aspirations, and community spirit.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Auburn Public Library enters the next five years with a clear sense of purpose and a renewed commitment to serving as a welcoming, responsive, and forward-looking community resource. This Strategic Plan reflects the voices, experiences, and aspirations of the many people who shared their time and insights throughout the planning process, including Library staff, trustees, Friends of the Auburn Public Library board members, and community members from Auburn and beyond.

The goals and objectives outlined in this plan provide a practical roadmap for strengthening services, expanding access, enhancing visibility, and deepening community connections. As Auburn evolves, the Library will remain attentive to emerging needs and continue adapting its programs, collections, technologies, and spaces to support learning, creativity, and connection for all who walk through its doors.

The Library will measure progress thoughtfully, communicate transparently, and celebrate successes along the way. With dedicated staff, engaged trustees, committed partners, and a supportive community, Auburn Public Library is well-positioned to grow, innovate, and thrive. This plan represents both a commitment and an invitation to imagine what is possible, to build on strengths, and to work collectively toward an even more vibrant future for everyone the Library serves.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- **Mary K. DeCoursey, Chair**
- **Vera Kirrane, Vice Chair**
- **Lindsay Baker**
- **Erika Briesacher**
- **Nan H. Johnson**
- **Matthew Toth**

APPENDICES

Following is a list of the Strategic Plan's appendices. They are available for download and review at the following link: <https://auburnlibrary.org/strategic-plan>

Appendix A—APL Strategic Planning Project Process 2025: The process map outlines the methodology for the strategic planning project, including the timeline, key project milestones, community needs assessment activities, and participants involved.

Appendix B—APL Adult Focus Groups Summary Report 2025: Two focus groups with 10 community members were conducted in July 2025.

Appendix C—APL BOT-FOAPL-SPAC Mini-Survey Results Summary Report 2025: This report documents the results of a brief survey conducted with Library trustees, Friends of the Auburn Public Library's board members, and Strategic Planning Advisory Committee members.

Appendix D—APL BOT and FOAPL SOAR Analysis Results 2025: This report details the results of an environmental assessment of the Library's strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results. This SOAR exercise was conducted with the Library's trustees and Friends of the APL board members.

Appendix E—APL Community Survey 2025 Results Summary Report: The community survey was conducted in June 2025. Respondents' feedback is presented in addition to summary results graphs and charts.

Appendix F—APL Community Vision Statement Report 2025: The report presents a prioritized list of the final community vision statements drafted by the Library's Strategic Planning Advisory Committee.

Appendix G—Auburn Public Library Fiscal Year 2025: This infographic presents key statistics related to the Library's collections, programs, and services.

Appendix H—History of the Auburn Public Library: This infographic presents a brief overview of the Auburn Public Library's historical milestones.

Appendix I—APL Staff Mini-Survey Results Summary Report 2025: This report documents the results of a brief survey conducted with trustees, Friends of the Auburn Public Library's board members, and SPAC members.

Appendix J—APL Staff SOAR Analysis Report 2025: This report documents the results of an environmental assessment of the Library's strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results. This SOAR exercise was conducted with the Library's staff and was facilitated by a Massachusetts Library Services consultant.

Appendix K—APL Teen Focus Group Summary Report 2025: One focus group for teenage community members was conducted in September 2025.

Appendix L—Town of Auburn Profile: This infographic presents key population, demographic, income, and school statistics for the Town of Auburn.