

Auburn Public Library Strategic Planning

Staff SOAR Analysis

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Overall Summary

The SOAR analysis showed the library values flexibility, collaborative staff, strong community connections, and diverse programming. It has a solid infrastructure and financial support. Opportunities include expanding teen and adult engagement, improving work and program spaces, enhancing technology access, and building partnerships to extend services beyond the library walls. Aspirations emphasize creating a welcoming, inclusive environment with differentiated spaces, outdoor areas, and cultural programming, while integrating digital resources, accessibility features, and innovative design. Desired results include greater community awareness and participation, sustainable growth through funding and outreach, and a positive, balanced workplace culture that fosters creativity, collaboration, and focus on doing fewer things exceptionally well. Additional ideas underscore the need for modern services, such as wireless printing, VR, notary and citizenship support, and programs that celebrate diversity and connection, all contributing to a vision of a dynamic, people-centered library that combines tradition with innovation.

Summary of themes

Strengths - Key Themes

- Staff Strength & Culture
 - Flexible and receptive to feedback.
 - Staff trust and value each other.
 - Strong relationships with patrons and the community.
- Programs & Services
 - Popular children's and youth programs (book clubs, Legos, games).
 - Growing range of programs for all ages.
 - Ability to experiment with new programs and adapt based on success.
- Community Connections
 - Strong ties with schools, town hall, recreation department, and local organizations (Youth & Family Services, Historical Society).
 - Seen as a valued community resource.
- Facilities & Location
 - Convenient location with parking.
 - Good space compared to other libraries.
 - Outdoor amenities (yard, wildlife, fishing dock).
 - Functional infrastructure (dependable building, HVAC system).
- Financial & Resource Support
 - Strong budget and town support.
 - Adequate supplies.
- Patron Services & Accessibility
 - Responsive to patron needs.
 - Library serves as a cooling center.
 - Accessible building

Opportunities – Key Themes

- Teen and Youth Engagement
 - Library is across from the high school, but potential is untapped.
 - Need for dedicated teen space and after-school programs.
 - Desk in children's area to engage youth more directly.
 - Align reading/book selection with school system methods.
- Adult and Older Adult Services
 - More adult-specific programming (tech literacy, crafting).
 - Support for job seekers (resume, cover letters, applications).
 - Reference librarian or additional staff for tech/job support.
- Community and Organizational Partnerships
 - Collaborate with Auburn Chamber of Commerce.

- Expand connection with CW/MARS and MLS.
- Build daycare contacts and visits.
- Programming and Engagement Ideas
 - More passive programming (puzzle tables, staff recommendations).
 - Expand Library of Things.
 - Volunteer opportunities for community members.
 - Increase homebound services (delivery, bookmobile).
- Space and Infrastructure Improvements
 - Patrons using library as workspace. Need more functional spaces like pods and more outlets.
 - Provide basic work supplies (headphones, chargers).
- Staff Development and Capacity
 - Staff training and retraining.
 - Opportunities to attend conferences.
 - Staff collaboration in teen space design.
 - More staff to handle new initiatives.
 - Broaden capacity to try new things despite time and budget limits.

Aspirations – Key Themes

- Improved Access and Connectivity
 - Larger parking lot.
 - Better pedestrian access from the high school.
 - Covered bus stop for public transit users.
- Expanded Outreach and Services
 - Bookmobile and homebound services.
 - Taking library programs/services outside of the physical building.
- Inclusive, Balanced Programming
 - Well-attended programs for all ages.
 - More teen presence in a dedicated space.
 - Growth of Friends group to support programming.
 - Music, art, and cultural programming.
- Space and Infrastructure Enhancements
 - Additional programming room.
 - Dedicated quiet/closed-off spaces.
 - Separate spaces for different age groups to reduce conflicts.
 - Storage near children's area.
 - Outdoor usable space for programs.
 - Improved furniture and aesthetics (matching furniture, blinds, art installations, playful elements like a hanging rocket).
- Collections and Digital Resources

- Strengthen adult and teen collections.
- Add online databases, music, and video platforms.
- Genealogy resources.
- Technology and Accessibility
 - Greater tech support for patrons.
 - Resources for other language users.
 - Better support for hard-of-hearing and deaf patrons.
 - Accessible play areas for sensory and physical needs.
- Creative and Experiential Features
 - Art displays and exhibits, partnerships with artists.
 - Garden (including roof garden).
 - Interactive and visually engaging environment.

Results – Key Themes

- Funding and Resources
 - Identify new funding sources.
 - Allocate resources for marketing and outreach.
 - More staff with clearly defined roles.
 - Utilize volunteers with proper coordination.
- Marketing and Outreach
 - Increase awareness of library offerings.
 - Grow email communication (Constant Contact) and social media (currently Facebook).
 - Outreach through schools, senior center, newsletters.
 - Develop systems for marketing and outreach.
- Program Participation and Community Engagement
 - Well-used spaces (study rooms filled).
 - Teens present in the library.
 - Children engaged (laughter).
 - Adults without kids engaged in programming.
- Quality of Service
 - Equitable services for different age ranges.
 - Reference librarian leading tech classes.
 - High-quality programming and collections.
- Organizational Culture and Staff Well-being
 - Happy, busy staff without burnout.
 - Good leadership, positive workplace tone.
 - Collaboration, communication, trust, and flexibility.
 - Support staff strengths and new ideas.
 - Comfort with failure and adaptability.

- Setting boundaries: doing fewer things really well.
- Avoiding “everything for everyone” trap.
- Partnership and Collaboration
 - Work with external partners for complementary services.
 - Learn from what works in other libraries.
- Physical Environment
 - Matching furniture, inviting aesthetic (non-sterile walls).
 - Spaces that feel welcoming and functional.

Additional Ideas – Key Themes

- Technology and Digital Access
 - Wireless printing, phone chargers, better staff printer.
 - Easier scanning, fax machine.
 - More e-content on the website, online databases, better digital signage.
 - VR sets, more Playaways.
 - Technology classes.
- Services and Support
 - Notary services.
 - Citizenship support.
 - Bingo, game night (community-building programs).
 - Volunteers to expand capacity.
 - Collaborating across age groups to understand and develop needs.
- Historical and Cultural Resources
 - Better organization and display of historical documents.
 - Increased access to local history resources.
- Community and Inclusivity
 - Building a sense of community where diversity is supported.
 - Addressing gaps in multicultural programming and education.
 - Ensuring that all patrons feel welcome, regardless of socioeconomic status.
 - Creating spaces for connection and belonging.
- Nature and Environment
 - Dream library includes natural, beautiful outdoor spaces.

Copy of all responses - Unedited

Strengths

- Flexible
- Flexible and receptive to feedback
- Staff has trust in each other.
- Children's programs are packed – used to be just younger kids but now broadening in ages.
- Youth – book clubs, Legos, games (growing).
- New programs – can try something new and see if successful
- Staff value and trust each other
- The staff as a whole is a strength – valuable to each other and the community.
- Staff know patrons and know them.
- This library has a strong adult population use.
- Museum membership program has been successful.
- Location is a big strength. (parking lot!) Very convenient.
- Strong connection to town hall and their services
- Ability to reach out to schools and get a response. Good communication.
- Recreation department collaboration
- Auburn Youth and Family - Garden program
- Historical Society
- Viewed in community as resource – they reach out
- Library is cooling center
- Bathrooms
- Responsive to patron needs
- Cooling bubbler – kids love it
- dependable building
- HVAC system works
- No elevator (more accessible)
- Good space compared to other libraries
- Good budget – town support
- Good supplies
- Great yard – outdoor space, wildlife, walking space, fishing (dock?)

Opportunities

- Right across from high school – but lots of room for improvement
- Teen space, after school activities
- More programing for adults specific
- Older adults expressed need to tech literacy
- Crafting programming

- Collaboration with Auburn Chamber of Commerce
- People looking for help Applying for job, resume, cover letter
- Having a reference librarian, additional staff to help with adult tech job needs
- More passive programming, ie puzzle tables, staff recommendations
- Lots of patrons use library as work space, need more space that is useful for this. Pods. Not enough electrical outlets.
- Basic supplies for working – headphones, chargers,
- Expand library of things
- Homebound patrons – delivery service who place holds – how to help people who cant get to library.
- Bookmobile
- Volunteer opportunities
- Broaden opportunities and capacity to handle
- Desk in children's area – have ability to work with kids/youth more directly
- Have a better way to match the reading/book selection match the school system method.
- Make teen space together as staff (get input from all)
- Help with staff training and retraining
- More connection with CWMars and MLS –
- Go to conferences
- Everyone is willing to try thing but hard to try new things in limited time and budget
- More Staff!
- Day care visits/ contacts

Aspirations

- a bigger parking lot
- A bridge over highway so easier to get to library from high school. Need better pedestrian walking access
- Covered bus stop outside library – a lot of patrons use bus
- Bookmobile – homebound services – go to others
- Get the library out of the library itself
- Balance and well attended programming across all ages
- See a lot of teens in the library, in their own space
- Grow the friends group - provide resources, programming
- Music
- Second programing room – more space to do programs,
- Storage space closer to or in the children's room
- Meeting space – right now only history room
- Quiet space/ closed off space

- Hard when there is not differentiated space – ages cross, program limits
- Useable outdoor space – outdoor programs
- Art displays – art exhibits – connect with artists – sculptures
- Focus on adult/teen collections going forward
- Online databases, music, video platforms,
- Genealogy resources
- Greater Technology support
- Investigate what would be helpful for other language services
- Hard of hearing/deaf patrons – systems easier to serve that population
- Garden (roof garden)
- All the furniture matched, curtain blinds
- Cool art -
- Rocket handing from ceiling
- Accessible play area – sensory challenges, physical needs

Results

- Budget – where can we get funding
- Get information to the people who don't know all the things the library offers
- Grow constant contact
- Grow social media (Facebook page now)
- Marketing
- Outreach – need more time/resources to do more outreach
- Share with senior center – get in there newsletter/other places
- Getting the programming out the schools
- Resources/system to do outreach/marketing
- More staff – more delineated roles for staff
- Equitable service for different age ranges
- Having backup/redundancies for some work – support to carry out work – sharing work needs
- Utilize volunteers, someone to coordinate and plan for volunteers.
- People in study rooms
- Reference librarian doing a tech class
- Teens in library
- Laughter of children
- Matching chairs
- Nonsterile walls
- Adults between 20-50 with no kids who want to come in
- Happy staff, busy staff but not overwhelmed
- Good leadership

- Set a good work place tone
- Supportive
- Setting boundaries
- Humor
- Availability
- Follow up
- Communication
- Patience
- Trust
- Dependability
- Keeping in tune with what is going on
- Supporting staff, finding staff strengths, support ideas
- Flexibility
- Supporting each other – finding ways to help with work
- Failure is OK. Comfort with failure – pivot and move forward
- Libraries fall into trap of being everything for everyone, too many things
- Set boundaries – Don't try to do too much.
- Do fewer things really well, not nothing well at all
- Collaborate with others so that you can rely on them for some thing and don't have to do it all
- What works elsewhere? Is that something this library should do? Or work with others for complementary services?

Additional Ideas

- Bingo
- Wireless printing
- Technology classes
- Phone chargers
- Better digital sign
- More econtent on website
- Better display find historical documents
- Better org for historical documents
- Online databases
- Game night
- VR sets – do something with those
- More play aways
- Notary services
- Citizenship support
- Fax machine

- Volunteers
- Collab with adults/kids Develop needs
- Easier scanning
- Better staff printer

Dream library

- Community – diversity/support
- Dream library – support ways for people to get to know each other.
- Gap in multiculture events education
- People come here vs other libraries because of unhoused in other libraries - gaps in socioeconomic status
- Community- People let people be who they are. Gap in the library because some people may not feel welcome in space
- Community – nature focus, dream library have natural beautiful nature spaces

