

Greenwich Library Reconnects

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023–2025



Greenwich
Library



Welcome

A letter from the Board of Trustees, Library Administration, and the Friends of Greenwich Library

We find ourselves in an exciting period of transition, with both change and opportunity in our rearview mirror and on the horizon. Over the past few years, we've adapted to positive as well as negative forces: We refreshed the Main Library with the completion of the major ReImagine Renovation and have risen to the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our patrons and community members have patiently adapted to these forces alongside us.

Now, as we look to 2023 and beyond, we anticipate further change and will continue to acclimate. The next chapter of the Library begins with the retirement of our Director, Barbara Ormerod-Glynn, steward of the Library since 2014, and the commencement of new leadership.

Going forward, we will continue to reflect on our role given some of the bigger questions facing society today: How can we build bridges in a time of great political and social divide? What are the opportunities to provide equitable access to accurate information from balanced perspectives? In the wake of changes brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, what do the futures of community, work, and study look like, and how can we best serve in that environment?

Understanding our role begins with

understanding the community we serve. With the Library system now fully open and pandemic-related distancing measures relaxed, the time is ripe for a new, concerted effort to reconnect with our patrons and the community and to think about our future. That is the focus of this plan: *Greenwich Library Reconnects*.


In the coming pages, you will find practical strategies that outline our commitment to reconnect and move forward. Using this three-year plan, we envision grounding ourselves in the community's hopes and needs, so that we may continue to offer exceptional services.

Through the process of developing this strategic update, we have already had many opportunities to reconnect with and engage our community, and we are grateful for the countless hours provided by community members, partners, staff, and trustees, as well as the Friends of Greenwich Library, Friends of Cos Cob Library, and Friends of the Byram Shubert Library.

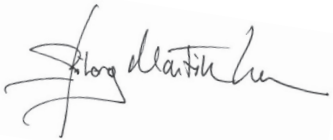
On behalf of our Board of Trustees, staff, and Friends groups, we look forward to reconnecting with you.



Peggy Edersheim Kalb
President, Greenwich Library Board of Trustees



Barbara Ormerod-Glynn
Director, Greenwich Library



Hilary Martin Lea
Chair, Friends of Greenwich Library





Three-time Grammy Award-winning jazz vocalist and composer Cécile McLorin Salvant

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Our

Foundations

Vision

We aim to preserve our legacy as a community treasure and to give our great community the Library it deserves, with a clear focus on the future.

Mission

The mission of Greenwich Library is to provide exceptional resources, programs, and services that promote the joy of lifelong learning and discovery, and to offer a welcoming place for people to gather and share experiences.

Values

- Promote the joy of reading and lifelong learning.
- Deliver superior library services.
- Celebrate and support the diversity of our community.
- Incorporate technology in a mindful and responsive way.
- Ensure free, equitable, and convenient access to information.
- Maintain collections that provide the community with a window to the past and a view to the future.
- Connect people with the world of ideas and information by developing and presenting programs that provide opportunities for learning and entertainment.
- Cultivate staff who are knowledgeable, passionate, and engaged about the role libraries play in individual lives and the community.

Throughout this plan, we have expanded our explicit focus on equity. As used throughout this document, “equity” means that all community members, regardless of background or age, can easily access Library resources, programs, and services and see their perspectives represented in Library collections, programming, and services.

Plan Priorities

This document is the second update to a Strategic Plan that was first established in 2012 and updated in 2018. During that time, we maintained our Vision, Mission, Values, and several of the same Focus Areas for our work. Thematically, this update centers on two primary, overarching priorities that will direct our efforts for the next three years:

Reconnecting

As the pandemic wanes, our focus will be on reconnecting community members with Library services, helping community members reconnect with one another, and building connections within the Library.

Assessing

Recognizing our current transitional state and the forthcoming change in leadership, this plan calls for another comprehensive strategic planning effort to occur in 2025. In preparation for this work, we will gather baseline data and conduct foundational thinking in each of our key service areas.



Our Areas of Focus

The following pages of this Strategic Plan detail our goals and strategies across seven Focus Areas, shown at right. Many of our strategies correspond to more than one Focus Area, as the reality of our work is multifaceted.

1 COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- a. Expand outreach and awareness-building to engage more community members in Library services and offerings.
- b. Coordinate and expand our use of volunteers.
- c. Develop a more strategic, institutional approach to partnerships.
- d. Help community members connect with one another, regardless of background, age, or identity.

2 PATRON SERVICES

- a. Provide patrons with a higher level of personalized support and connection to resources.
- b. Implement new or modified services to best meet the needs of patrons.

3 TECHNOLOGY

- a. Continue to provide and support current patron- and staff-focused technologies.
- b. Ensure that all Greenwich residents have equitable access to Library technology.

4 PROGRAMMING

- a. Deliver a dynamic, balanced, and sustainable programming mix.
- b. Create opportunities for community dialogue and information-sharing.

5 COLLECTIONS

- a. Ensure our collections reflect the Greenwich community's diverse backgrounds and interests.
- b. Promote our collections via related programming and partnerships.

6 SPACE AND FACILITIES

- a. Invest in targeted facilities improvements for Byram, Cos Cob, and Main.
- b. Plan for improved environmental sustainability of our facilities and operations.

7 ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

- a. Continue to cultivate diverse, highly skilled staff.
- b. Cultivate greater coordination and communication among Library departments.
- c. Steward our financial resources.
- d. Engage community and staff in a new comprehensive strategic planning effort.



1

Community Connections

Following the social isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic, reconnecting with our community is a top priority. We will do this not only by communicating directly with our patrons, but also by helping our fellow community members build connections with each other and by closely collaborating with partners to reach Greenwich residents who are not yet regular Library patrons. We will welcome volunteers to join us in our efforts to create a connected community.

- a. **Expand outreach and awareness-building to engage more community members in Library services and offerings.**
 - Gather regular patron feedback.
 - Enhance community outreach and build greater awareness of all the Library has to offer. (See “Our Outreach and Awareness-Building” at right.)
- b. **Coordinate and expand our use of volunteers.**
 - Standardize volunteer roles and create a framework for how the Library and Friends will recruit, vet, and work with volunteers to support sustainable Library programming and services.
 - Increase opportunities for volunteers to give back to the Library and community.
- c. **Develop a more strategic, institutional approach to partnerships.**
 - Centralize information and track partnership efforts across the Library system.
 - Strengthen and build connections to key partners.
 - Build staff awareness of partner resources.
- d. **Help community members connect with one another, regardless of background, age, or identity.**
 - Ensure physical spaces are welcoming.
 - Offer opportunities for virtual connection among patrons through social media and online programming.
 - Offer programming that engages diverse audiences and encourages community dialogue.

OUR OUTREACH AND AWARENESS-BUILDING

We will promote the Library's resources and offerings, including:

- The Library as a place to access trusted advisors to help find reliable information
- The Library as a welcoming environment where the community can expect exceptional customer service
- The Main Library's newly renovated spaces and all the ways to benefit from them
- The Library collections, programs, and services as valuable resources, especially for new users

Deliverables

- Increased communications and outreach efforts
- Centralized partnership tracking tool
- Framework for Library and Friends' roles in recruiting, training, and using volunteers
- Tools in use to gather ongoing patron feedback and a rich collection of patron input obtained to inform the 2025 strategic planning process

Desired Outcomes

- Increased participation in Library services and offerings
- Strengthened connections to partners in key areas
- Increased volunteer hours and contributions



2

Patron Services

In an era of impersonal online transactions, our ability to provide personalized service for patrons is an increasingly important part of the value we offer. Customer service is core to our goal of reconnecting with residents, drawing patrons into Library buildings, and guiding them to our services.

- a. **Provide patrons with a higher level of personalized support and connection to resources.**
 - Assess and further streamline the patron experience for users visiting the Library in person or online.
 - Support patron information literacy and research skills through targeted programs.
 - Create an inventory of individual staff members' specialized knowledge.
 - Offer targeted support for patrons with limited access to resources, including those who cannot read, who do not speak English fluently, or who struggle with technology.
- b. **Implement new or modified services to best meet the needs of patrons.**
 - Evaluate new types of services and make recommendations for the adoption of appropriate ones.
 - Assess service adaptations from the COVID-19 pandemic and adopt some permanently.

Deliverables

- Visualizations of typical patron journeys as they seek to accomplish something to help identify barriers they may encounter
- Service adaptations in place for patrons who have limited access to resources
- Inventory of internal staff expertise

Desired Outcomes

- High measures of customer satisfaction



3 Technology

We will incorporate new, cutting-edge technologies that keep pace with evolving community needs and that reflect the increasingly central role of technology in our world. While many members of our community have access to technology and a high level of technology skills, some do not. We will support these community members to ensure they have access to information in the 21st century.

- a. Continue to provide and support current patron- and staff-focused technologies.
 - Track industry trends and regularly update a comprehensive, multiyear Technology Plan to align IT resources and operations.
 - Maintain high cybersecurity standards while continuing to enable patron access to information.
 - Explore opportunities to use technology to improve the patron experience, introduce patrons to new technologies, and increase accessibility.
 - Continue to use technology to support in-person and online programs.
- b. Ensure that all Greenwich residents have equitable access to Library technology.
 - Provide technology training to patrons of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.
 - Expand on-demand training resources to help patrons use the Library catalog, databases, and the most up-to-date software.

Deliverables

- Multiyear Technology Plan in place
- Programs offered in multiple formats
- Additional on-demand technology-related training and resources available

Desired Outcomes

- Security of Library technology systems
- Strong participation in technology programs
- Customer satisfaction with Library technology



4 Programming

We will continue to offer well over 1,000 programs each year, including author talks and lectures, performances, story times, workshops, and trainings. Through these programs and others, like our new Signature Series and Performing Arts programming in the renovated Berkley Theater, we will collaborate with our Friends groups to inform and engage thousands of adults, teens, and children. Our programs will: Reflect the diversity of our community; address community issues like climate change, the mental health crisis, and youth wellness; and support meaningful community conversations in an increasingly polarized climate.

- a. Deliver a dynamic, balanced, and sustainable programming mix. (See “Our Programming Mix” at right.)
 - Create a sustainable programming strategy that establishes the mix of programs we will deliver.
 - Identify opportunities for enhancing Library program capacity over time.
 - Plan programs that address community interests and trending topics.
 - Increase programming representation, accessibility, and inclusion.
- b. Create opportunities for community dialogue and information-sharing.
 - Offer opportunities for community members to discuss and address current community needs and issues.
 - Engage in conversations with the community to identify and implement ways to convene community members in a more inclusive way.

Deliverables

- Sustainable programming strategy

Desired Outcomes

- Programs that address current community issues
- Increased diversity of programming topics and presenters
- Community feedback that indicates the Library is valued as a convener and a center for culture

OUR PROGRAMMING MIX

A dynamic, balanced, and sustainable programming mix should:

- Meet community interests
- Complement partners' programming
- Advance the Library's Mission and Goals
- Reflect diverse perspectives
- Consider Library resources



5 Collections

Greenwich Library's core offering has always been the depth and breadth of our collections, including traditional print and physical resources, art, digital items, databases, streaming services, Innovation Lab circuitry kits, and eLearning platforms. Now, as our community further diversifies, we will ensure our materials reflect a diversity of voices, so that all Greenwich residents can see themselves reflected in our materials and learn about perspectives they might not otherwise encounter. The coming years also call for a continued consideration of the balance between our physical and digital collections, ensuring that patrons can engage with materials in whatever format they prefer.

- a. **Ensure our collections reflect the Greenwich community's diverse backgrounds and interests.**
 - Conduct a diversity audit and expand metrics to anonymously track the use of our collections.
 - Collect materials that reflect the Greenwich community, including our English as a Second Language (ESL) collection and world languages.
- b. **Promote our collections via related programming and partnerships.**
 - Find new ways to enhance how we connect Library program participants and partner participants with relevant Library collections and resources.
 - Collaborate with partners to connect their communities to Library collections.

Deliverables

- Diversity audit undertaken and expanded metrics established to anonymously track use of Library collections
- Expanded collections in ESL and world languages

Desired Outcomes

- An increased proportion of programs that connect participants to collections
- An increase in the diversity of users who engage with our collections, as measured by a patron survey
- An increase in the number of community partners connecting their communities to our collections



The Martha Graham Dance Company
enjoying Greenwich Library's collection

6 Space and Facilities

We offer a range of indoor and outdoor spaces and facilities for our community. After honing our virtual connections during the COVID-19 pandemic, we will welcome Greenwich residents to return in person, with spaces and facilities that reflect the constantly evolving needs of our community.

- a. **Invest in targeted facilities improvements for Byram Shubert, Cos Cob, and Main.**
 - Renovate the Cos Cob Branch Library, informed by community engagement.
 - Develop a plan for the targeted improvements at Byram Shubert Branch Library to enhance quiet reading and studying.
 - Invest in fun and playful visual elements in all three Library buildings.
 - Enhance individual and group study rooms to support remote work.
 - Modify meeting spaces to make them more adaptable to virtual and hybrid programming.
 - Develop a plan for spaces currently housing physical materials that may soon become obsolete.
 - Increase the use of outdoor spaces to extend the Library outside.
- b. **Plan for improved environmental sustainability of our facilities and operations.**
 - Evaluate opportunities to use sustainable materials and practices in facilities, equipment, and operations.

Deliverables

- Renovations at the Cos Cob Branch Library
- Plans for internal improvements at Byram Shubert Branch Library
- Plans for future use of library spaces at Main and branches

Desired Outcomes

- Adaptive and effective library spaces
- Improved environmental footprint



7 Organizational Effectiveness

The rapidly changing conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic required staff and our entire organization to continuously adapt services over the past few years. As conditions stabilize, we are committed to ensuring that our staff and everyone involved in Library operations feel supported and well-equipped to best serve our community. In the final year of this strategic update, when we are under new leadership and building on the many core services identified on the prior pages, we will embark once again on a robust strategic planning effort that considers our new context and the best direction for the Library moving forward.

- a. **Continue to cultivate diverse, highly skilled staff.**
 - Conduct a staffing needs assessment to ensure the sustainable delivery of high-quality services.
 - Attract diverse staff who reflect the demographics of our community.
 - Plan for a comprehensive approach to staff growth and development, including new hire orientation and a mentorship structure.
 - Consider the benefits and resource needs associated with potential intern programs.
 - Provide training to enhance staff skills and expertise with a particular focus on equity, customer service, technology, and collections management.
- b. **Cultivate greater coordination and communication among Library departments.**
 - Improve communication among buildings and departments.
 - Explore opportunities to expose staff to the work of other departments and share staff between the branches and Main.
- c. **Steward our financial resources.**
 - Align Library offerings with existing Library financial resources for the duration of this Strategic Plan.
 - Advocate for advantageous pricing and licensing terms for digital materials in collaboration with other libraries.



OUR NEXT STRATEGIC PLANNING EFFORT

The Library is in a period of rapid transformation following the COVID-19 pandemic, a major renovation at the Main Library, and a leadership transition coming in 2023. As the Library embarks on the development of a new Strategic Plan in 2025, the assessments conducted from 2023-2025 will help address key strategic questions, including:

- How can the Library be as relevant as possible and offer the most value to the Greenwich community?
- How can the Library best serve an increasingly diverse population?
- What is the right mix of programming to meet the Greenwich community's range of interests while remaining sustainable for Library staff and volunteers?
- Do these evolutions call for adaptations in the Library's Mission, core services, or staffing model?

d. Engage community and staff in a new comprehensive strategic planning effort. (See “Our Next Strategic Planning Effort” at right.)

- Synthesize the key findings and lessons learned from the assessments in each of our core service areas.
- In 2025, engage staff and community members in an in-depth strategic planning process that reexamines the Library's guiding statements and long-term role, and results in a new five-year Strategic Plan.

Deliverables

- Staffing Needs Assessment
- Formalized approach to new staff orientation and mentoring
- Updated training and development program for staff
- Strategic Plan update in 2025

Desired Outcomes

- Increased diversity of staff
- Staff satisfaction with development and training opportunities
- Increased alignment among staff from different units
- Library service levels aligned with staff capacity to deliver

Key Accomplishments from 2018 to 2022

Our Strategic Plan 2018–2022 was centered on significant renovations to the Main Library, including creating dynamic spaces for study, programming, and work.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- Increased outreach to students at public and private schools.
- Partnered with Abilis to introduce The Café at Greenwich Library.
- Provided services like book discussions at partner organization sites.
- Connected with Town agencies and nonprofits to pursue joint initiatives.
- Continued to engage the community during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic by assisting schools with remote learning, conducting outreach to homebound patrons and those who live in senior residences, and creating opportunities for social connection through programming.

PATRON SERVICES

Titled "Service" in the 2018–2022 Plan

- Enhanced our ability to meet in-person patron needs through the ReImagine Renovation.
- Introduced an online real-time chat service.
- Automated some services, including online registration for new and renewed Library cards.
- Enhanced our website for usability and ADA compliance.
- Enacted interim no-contact pick-up services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

TECHNOLOGY

Not listed explicitly in the 2018–2022 Plan

- Implemented technological advances to support patrons during the pandemic, including a real-time online reference librarian chat, online account creation, online room reservations, and the use of credit cards for printing.
- Extended indoor and outdoor WiFi coverage at Main so patrons could access the internet even when the Library was closed for the renovation and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Made technological improvements in spaces at Main as part of the ReImagine Renovation.
- Expanded IT responsibilities to emphasize cybersecurity threats and threat mitigation.

PROGRAMMING

Titled "Lifelong Learning and Enrichment" in the 2018–2022 Plan

- Reassessed and updated our programming mix to include extensive internal collaboration and to align with available space and staffing.
- Introduced signature performing arts and literary programming.
- Introduced virtual and hybrid programming.
- Repurposed staff positions to support programming and events.

COLLECTIONS

- Resized 147 collection areas with support from 30 different collection managers.
- Added express books, staff pick displays, and other display tables throughout the buildings.
- Grew digital collections to meet increased demand.

SPACE AND FACILITIES

Titled "Space" in the 2018–2022 Plan

- Initiated and completed the large-scale ReImagine Renovation of the Main Library.
- Commenced discussions to consider enhancements to Cos Cob and Byram Shubert, now planned for the coming years.

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Not listed explicitly in the 2018–2022 Plan

- Reevaluated staff vacancies against staffing needs and repurposed positions as needed, including Public Relations, Information Technology, and Facilities.
- Facilitated improved communications among staff through the ReImagine Renovation by creating dynamic work spaces for Library departments.
- Filled staff vacancies with highly skilled new hires despite labor shortages and historically high turnover rates during the pandemic.
- Effectively pivoted to a remote work model during pandemic closures.





Author James McBride
presenting at the
Berkley Theater

Our Process to Update This Plan

Greenwich Library Reconnects builds on the success of the Library's 2012–2017 and 2018–2022 Strategic Plans. A Strategic Plan Steering Committee (SPSC), which included current and former members of the Board of Trustees, Library leadership, and the Chair of the Friends of Greenwich Library, produced this update in collaboration with other Library staff and representatives of the Friends of Greenwich Library, the Friends of the Byram Shubert Library, and the Friends of Cos Cob Library.

We launched the planning process in late 2021 by assembling staff Work Groups, which gathered and analyzed in-depth information on eight topic areas to provide a snapshot of the Library's baseline conditions and potential priorities in the coming years. The Library then closed its doors for one day in April 2022 to allow all staff and members of the Friends groups and Board of Trustees to convene for a day-long strategic planning retreat. Following this retreat, the SPSC synthesized findings and developed a draft Strategic Plan, which was then circulated in early autumn for further review and discussion by the Steering Committee, Board of Trustees Planning Committee, the Friends of Greenwich Library Board, and the Boards of the Friends of Cos Cob Library and the Friends of the Byram Shubert Library. The update was adopted by the Board of Trustees on October 11, 2022.

For a full list of contributors to this update, see the Acknowledgments section on the following page.

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AUREOLE, PHOTO BY WHITNEY BROWNE

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