

Strategic Plan 2026 – 2029



HASTINGS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Explore • Imagine • Grow

Published December, 2025

Strategic Plan 2026 – 2029

Letter to the Community



On behalf of the entire Hastings Public Library Board of Trustees and the Library staff, we want to sincerely thank the community for the support you provide to the Library. What we do every day is both for you and because of you.

We are very excited to present this Strategic Plan as the culmination of a year's worth of effort. Informed by a significant amount of community feedback, the plan will help guide the staff and the Library Board through the next four years as we continue to enhance the resources and services that the Library provides. While we have always known that the community values the Library, we heard firsthand through the surveys and focus groups how truly thankful so many of you are, and how important this organization is to you, both for what it stands for and what it offers.

The Strategic Plan is our commitment to you to continue offering the best resources that we can, and to remain responsive to the needs of the entire community. Over the next four years, we intend to tackle a long list of Action Plan items that support the Commitments and Goals you will read about in the following pages. Updates on progress will be published quarterly at Board Meetings and on the Library's website.

Near the end of the plan timeframe in 2029, we will re-evaluate our environment, accomplishments, opportunities, and goals, and look at establishing new goals to extend the plan for additional years.

Be sure to keep the feedback coming and let us know how we are doing.

Thank you again for all of your support, and for showing us that what we do is valuable to you.

Sincerely,

Kelli Newberry
Library Board President

David Edelman
Library Director

Strategic Plan 2026 – 2029

Executive Summary



Overview

The Hastings Public Library engaged with key stakeholders in 2025 to learn what the community needs from us. That feedback led to an updated *Vision* statement, a new *Purpose* statement, and a new 4-year *Strategic Plan*. Our new *Strategic Commitments* will guide us as we maintain our role as a vital hub of learning, enrichment, and connections for the community at large.

These two statements define who we are as a library:

Purpose Why We Exist

The library is dedicated to providing access to the information and resources essential for exploring the world, envisioning new possibilities, encouraging imagination, and embracing lifelong learning while fostering connections among individuals.

Vision What We Strive For

The library strives to be a vital hub of trust and knowledge at the heart of our community, where everyone is embraced and empowered to come together for personal growth and collective enrichment.

We reviewed input from multiple sources to identify how we can best serve the community, our partners, and our internal team.

These **Strategic Commitments** will guide us moving forward:

Commitment	Description & Key Focuses
Resources	Enrich the resources available to the community. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Physical & Digital Collections and the Physical Building
Partnerships	Enhance existing partnerships and establish new connections. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Schools, Non-Profit Partners, BCF, and Healthcare Partners
Innovation	Explore innovative approaches to educate, entertain, and inform the varied communities we serve. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Programming, Makerspace/STEAM, Community Outreach, and Unique Services
Operations	Expand organizational capacity to support future growth and lasting community impact. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Financial Sustainability, Staff & Board Support, and Marketing & Social Media

Strategic Plan 2026 – 2029

Library Overview



The Hastings Public Library (HPL) is located in the City of Hastings in beautiful Barry County, Michigan. What began as the Women’s Club Reading Room in 1896 became the public library we are today. Located at one time in the High School, and then in the former Post Office, the Library moved to its current location next to City Hall in 2007 when a new building was erected.

Serving just over 13,500 residents, HPL occupies approximately 19,000 sq. ft., and houses over 38,000 books, movies, audiobooks, and more. Digital offerings are in excess of 130,000 items. HPL also offers many unique services and collections, including a Library of Things, a free puzzle exchange, remote and mobile printing, a notary service, free Wi-Fi 24/7/365, public computers, and so much more.

Programs and events happen throughout the year for all ages. We offer storytimes for preschool and toddlers, makerspace events, teen activities, book clubs and discussion groups, Summer and Winter Reading challenges, cooking classes, environmental education, Family Science Night, Cookies with Santa, a Holiday Market, and much, much more.

We have a dedicated staff of 14 and are governed by 9 members of an appointed Board of Trustees who represent our service area: the City of Hastings, Rutland Charter Township, and Hastings Charter Township.

We also have a dedicated Friends of the Library group who volunteer to shelve books, assist with programs, and more. They also hold two annual book sales, host an annual Wine Pairing Dinner and Auction, and have many other events throughout the year raising money to support us.

Library Board of Trustees as of December 2025

**Sam Cale
Jane Cybulski
Ann Devroy
Carol Dwyer
Rebecca Lectka
Ellyn Main
Amanda Mattson
Kelli Newberry
Cloe Oliver**

Strategic Plan 2026 – 2029

Vision and Purpose



Most strategic plans lead off with Mission and Vision statements, but ours is a little different.

Purpose

Purpose may be a new concept to some when thinking about strategic planning. While similar in some ways to the traditional Mission statement, Purpose means exactly what you expect: Why are we here? What is our Purpose as a Library? It is why we exist.

Our Purpose defines what we do every day, from the books and movies we offer, to the programs and events we host, to being a gathering space and a connector to community resources.

The library is dedicated to providing access to the information and resources essential for exploring the world, envisioning new possibilities, encouraging imagination, and embracing lifelong learning while fostering connections among individuals.

Vision

Vision is what we aspire to, what we want to be, or continue to be. The Library is, and commits to remaining, a vital member of our community.

The library strives to be a vital hub of trust and knowledge at the heart of our community, where everyone is embraced and empowered to come together for personal growth and collective enrichment.

Strategic Plan 2026 – 2029

Strategic Commitments



Careful review of all feedback from the community, staff, partners, and the Library Board of Trustees, identified several common themes. Some of those themes became the four *Commitments* that make up the Strategic Plan.

Why Commitments?

Strategic Plans frequently refer to focuses, priorities, pillars, and similar concepts. HPL chose to call its focus areas *Commitments* because we see this plan as our commitment to the community, our partners, our staff, and the Board. The work we do is for all of those core groups, and we remain committed to doing everything we can to best serve the community at large.

HPL's Strategic Commitments



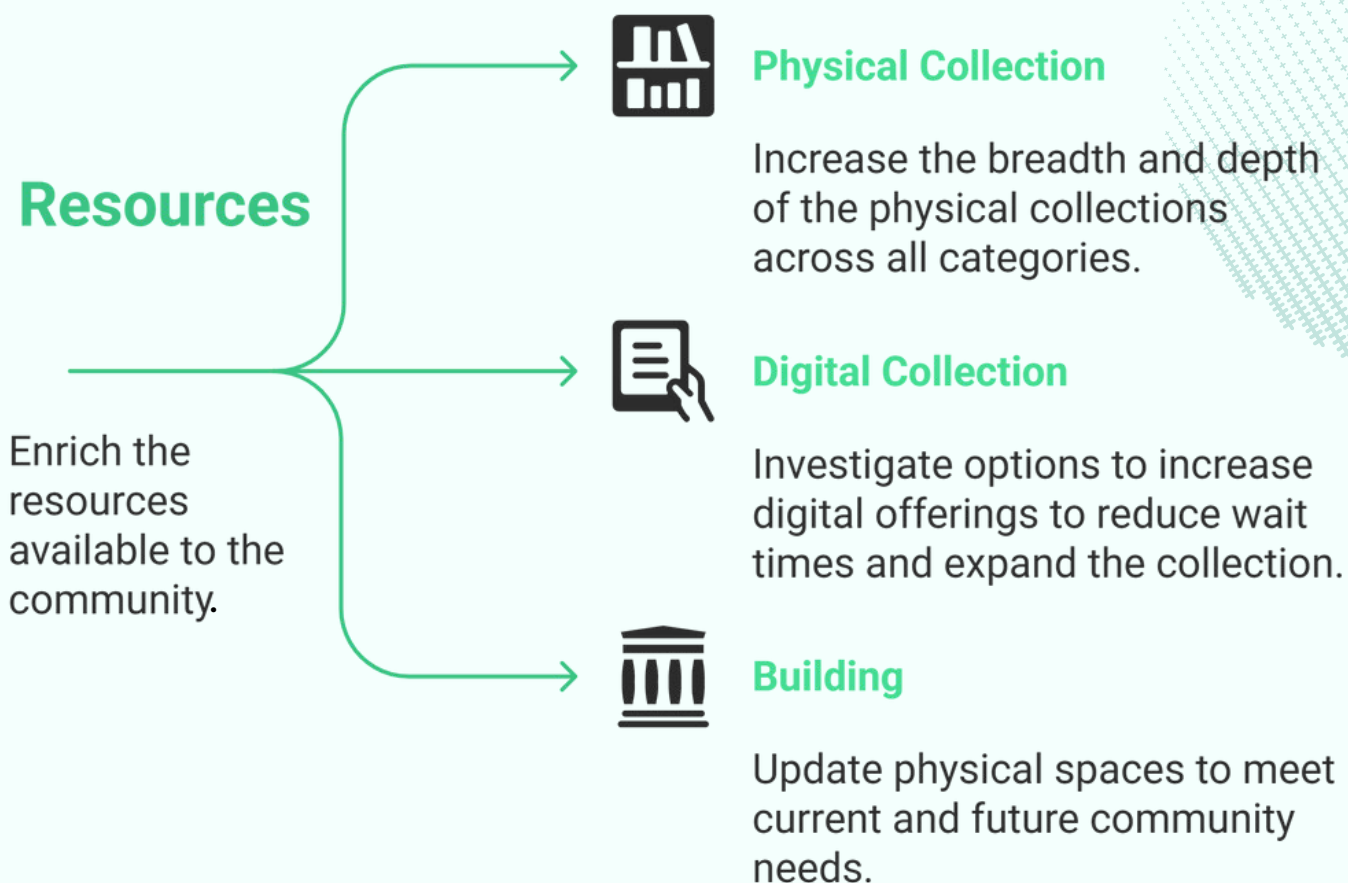
Strategic Plan 2026 – 2029

Goals – Resources



Each Strategic Commitment is comprised of several high-level goals. These are reflective of the themes and feedback identified throughout the Strategic Planning process. Some of them address opportunities for improvement, while others focus on efforts to further strengthen what the Library is already doing well.

Over the next four years, HPL will tackle projects big and small to further the goals described in the following pages for each Strategic Commitment. See the Action Plan Overview on page 14 for more information about how we will publish progress updates.



Strategic Plan 2026 – 2029

Goals – Partnerships



Strategic Plan 2026 – 2029

Goals – Innovation



Innovation

Explore innovative approaches to educate, entertain and inform the varied communities we serve.



Expand Programming

Build on past successes to further expand our offerings to a wider cross-section of the community, while maintaining the in-demand core offerings.



Enhance Makerspace/STEAM

Find partners to expand our current offerings to build capacity for programs and education on emerging technologies and STEAM initiatives.



Community Outreach

Explore new ways to engage with the community outside of the physical library space.



Unique Services

Explore technologies and services to increase Library ease of use.

Strategic Plan 2026 – 2029

Goals – Operations



Strategic Plan 2026 – 2029 Planning Process – Overview & Community Surveys



The Strategic Planning process spanned most of calendar year 2025 and involved all staff members at various stages. The project was led by:

- David Edelman, Library Director
- Tess Allerding, Assistant Director
- Erin Quada, Youth Librarian
- Barbara Haywood, Marketing and Adult Programming Coordinator
- Chloe Lewis, Circulation Supervisor

All staff participated in feedback sessions and discussions from defining the Library's Purpose and Vision statements through action plan development. The Board was involved in similar discussions and gave the final approval to the plan.

Carol Dawe, Director of the Lakeland Library Cooperative, offered her services as consultant. Having helped many other libraries, she was an invaluable resource to us.

A key step in the process was gathering community feedback through a community survey. Two versions were created: one for tweens & teens, and one for adults. Between online and hardcopy versions we had over 260 total responses.

We received great suggestions and appreciate all of the kind words. More detailed survey results are in the Appendix.



"Friendly, welcoming, helpful and safe."

"I like that the library has a variety of programming for all ages and keeps things fresh."

"I think the Library to some degree ... Is ... the Community. It's diverse, young, old, new and historical. It NEVER should EVER be deemed unimportant or on the chopping block. I Love the Library."

Strategic Plan 2026 – 2029 Planning Process – Focus Groups



Focus groups were also critical, with Carol leading 12 separate groups whose participants included library staff, the HPL Board, community partners, and community members.

Some of the collective focus group feedback is at right.

The focus groups gave more detailed feedback, and along with the surveys, provided valuable data to identify common themes. From there, our Strategic Commitments and Goals were formed.

More focus group information can be found in the Appendix.

HPL Event Calendar

[« Back to Events](#)

Community Focus Group Session

🕒 July 23, 2025, 10:00am - 11:00am

📍 Library

👤 General Interest

REGISTRATION CLOSED

🖨️ PRINT PDF

Following up on HPL's Community Survey of Summer 2025, focus group sessions are being held to gather more detailed information from interested survey respondents. If you did not complete the survey but are still interested in attending a session, feel free to register.

"The library is a haven: a safe and friendly space for everyone."

"The library tells the community's story. The library lets us learn from each other."

"Increase and grow the collection. Lakeland lending is great but we would like more materials here."

"Look at different hours: Sundays perhaps? "

Strategic Plan 2026 – 2029 Planning Process – Timeline



Here is an overview of the process throughout 2025.



Strategic Plan 2026 – 2029

Action Plan Overview



Each year, HPL will work on numerous Action Plan items to meet the goals of our Strategic Plan. Late in each calendar year, we will revisit the master list of Action Plan items and identify which ones to consider working on in the following year. The list is long and continuously added to, but unfortunately, we cannot work on too many things at one time.

Circumstances may cause some initiatives to be accelerated, delayed, or even canceled. Some ideas and investigations will not pan out. New items may be added throughout the process based on needs or external influences. Part of managing our Action Plan will be staying flexible based on our environment and the community's needs. If emergencies arise, we may have to place projects on hold, but over the life of the Strategic Plan, we intend to accomplish as much as possible.

Early in each quarter, we will publish an update on what was accomplished, and what challenges may have been identified, for items in the previous quarter. These updates will be presented to the Library Board of Trustees during normally scheduled Board Meetings and available for review within the Board Packet. We will also publish Strategic Plan updates on the library's website on similar timing.

Questions about what we are working on can always be addressed to the Library Director.

New Ideas

As new ideas for Action Plan items come up, we will evaluate them for inclusion in many ways:

- Alignment: does the idea align with our goals?
- Sustainability: is the idea sustainable? can it be maintained in the long-term?
- Measurement: can we measure the idea's outcomes and outputs to determine "success"?
- Collaboration: can we do it alone, or do we want/need others to work on the idea with us? will collaboration yield a larger impact?
- Impact: will implementing the idea have a large impact on many or a small but significant impact on the community?