



MARS AREA PUBLIC LIBRARY

STRATEGIC PLAN

2026-2030



Mission & Vision

Mission: The mission of Mars Area Public Library is to inform, educate, entertain, and culturally enrich by providing books, library materials, facilities, and professional services for all individuals in our area.

Vision: A Community destination for education, entertainment, and social interaction.



Library Strategic Planning

Committee
Members &
Workshop
Participants



Board Members

- ▶ Jennifer Bainbridge, Adams Rep.
- ▶ Rob Vigue, Valencia Rep. *(Former)*
- ▶ Anastacia Nelson, Mars Rep.
- ▶ Jen Cannon, Mars Rep.
- ▶ Vanessa Fellers, Adams Rep.
- ▶ Katie Johnston, Middlesex Rep.
- ▶ Emily Wiley, Middlesex Rep.

Staff

- ▶ Janae Callihan, Library Director
- ▶ Tara Watson, Children's Librarian
- ▶ Vince D'Alesio, Outreach Librarian
- ▶ Elizabeth Hoy, Circulation Lead
- ▶ Avery Chandler, Technical Services
- ▶ Doreen Paese, Youth Service Assistant
- ▶ Kate Campbell, Circulation Clerk
- ▶ Sarah Arnold, Circulation Clerk
- ▶ Diane Schaeffer, Circulation Clerk

Volunteers

- ▶ Linda N. Friends of the Library Co-Chair
- ▶ Alice D.
- ▶ Alice C.
- ▶ Linda A.



Goal 1: Enhance Library Programs & Services

Objectives:

- **Community Collaborations**
 - By December 2030, the library will establish a minimum of three new collaborations or co-sponsored programs and or outreach with community partners each year, resulting in at least 15 new collaborations total over the five-year period, to expand program reach, diversify offerings, and strengthen community connections.
- **Teen Programming – Teen Lounge**
 - By January 2027, the library will work with the Teen Advisory Board to develop, fund, and launch a monthly Teen Lounge program. From February 2027 through December 2027, the library will host at least one Teen Lounge per month, with the goal of increasing teen participation and engagement by the end of the year, as measured by attendance tracking and teen feedback.

Goal 2: Explore Community Engagement

Objectives:

- **New Resident Outreach**
 - By December 2026, the library will establish a partnership with at least one local real estate agency/developer to include a library welcome kit for new residents, introducing library services, programs, and resources to individuals and families new to the community.
- **Higher Education Partnerships**
 - By December 2027, the library will develop recurring partnerships with at least two higher education institutions to engage students, faculty, or staff in ways that enhance patron services, educational programming, professional development, or workforce readiness, with partnerships reviewed annually for impact.
- **Homeschool Partnership**
 - By December 2028 develop and establish recurring program series in partnership with local co-ops and homeschool initiatives, measured by the number of programs offered annually, attendance, and participant feedback.



Goal 3: Elevate Funding, Infrastructure & Support

Objectives:

- **Board-Led Program Sponsorships**
 - Beginning in 2026 and continuing annually through 2030, each Board member will cultivate at least one community partnership or secure sponsorship for one library program per year, supporting sustainable funding, increased visibility, and stronger community investment in library services.
- **Library Facility Development:**
 - By December 2030, the library will advance the planning, funding, and readiness for an updated library facility that supports future growth in programs, services, staff capacity, and community use, to be assessed yearly and subject to change.
- **Volunteers:**
 - Beginning in 2026 and assessed continually through 2030 the Library Director and Staff will work closely with the Friends of the Library and the community to develop a robust and committed volunteer organization to support library goals and growth with a growth of 3% increase of volunteers.

Goal 4: Empower Personnel

Objectives:

- **Staff Communication & Engagement**
 - By December 2028, the library will develop and implement a structured staff meeting schedule, holding quarterly staff meetings to support communication, collaboration, and organizational alignment, with attendance and agendas documented.
- **Employee Benefits & Retention**
 - By January 2028, the Board will research, evaluate, and identify viable options to offer health care benefits to full-time staff, with the goal of improving staff retention, recruitment, and overall employee well-being.
- **Staff Workspace & Workflow Study**
 - By December 2027, the library will complete a comprehensive space and workflow study of staff work areas, identifying opportunities to improve efficiency, ergonomics, and collaboration, and develop an implementation plan based on findings.

Strategic Planning Process & Community Input

The Mars Area Public Library engaged in a comprehensive and inclusive planning process designed to ensure that its strategic priorities reflect community needs, trends, and aspirations. The Library utilized a variety of feedback tools to gather input from a broad cross-section of library users and non-users.

This process included multiple surveys, such as the Library's annual Summer Reading Survey, a Community Library Survey distributed in September 2025 by the four municipalities served by the Library, and a targeted children's programming feedback survey conducted in 2025. Collectively, these surveys captured both quantitative data through category-based questions and qualitative insights through open-ended responses, allowing the Library to identify patterns, priorities, and emerging needs.

In May 2025, the Library also hosted a community conversation to gather in-person feedback from residents. This event provided an opportunity for community members to share perspectives on local needs, trends, and challenges while serving as a springboard for discussion following the Library's announcement as a recipient of an American Library Association grant. The conversation reinforced the value of direct community engagement and informed future service considerations.

Additionally, the Library conducted an in-service strategic workshop that brought together staff, volunteers, and board members. During this session, participants reviewed community input, discussed observed service gaps, and identified opportunities for the Library to better meet current and future community needs.

Based on the collective input from surveys, public engagement, and internal collaboration, the Library formed a smaller strategic planning committee. This committee was charged with refining priorities, developing measurable goals, and finalizing the strategic plan that will guide the Mars Area Public Library over the next five years.



Themes from Community Input & Engagement

Community Engagement & Reach

A majority of respondents indicated that this was not their first year participating, demonstrating strong participant retention and ongoing community engagement. Repeat participation suggests that the Summer Reading Program is a trusted and valued annual program contributing to long-term library relationships.

Library Environment & Customer Experience

Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that they felt welcome at the library. Positive perceptions of staff and the overall library environment were consistent across age groups.

Program Quality

High satisfaction ratings across survey questions indicate continued improvement in program design, relevance, and delivery, seeing higher engagement and Summer Reading completions rates. However the library needs to be aware of continued and growing demand for programs. Programs are seeing some strain in space, staffing, and registration capacity.

Strong Support for Long Term Growth

A clear majority of respondents expressed support for building a new library. This demonstrates board community recognition that the current facility no longer meets growing needs and shows that community members understand the value of the Library and support proactive investment in its future.

Readiness for Conversations about Relocation

Respondents who support a new facility show strong preferences across all municipalities in sites that are centrally located, easily accessible, and well integrated into the larger community. This feedback provides actionable data to inform and enhance municipal discussions about the future of the library.

Improvement Opportunities

While respondents supported the idea of a new facility, feedback varied regarding what features and services matter most.

Top 4 improvement suggestions:

- Programming Space
- Children's & Teen Areas
- Technology Access
- Community Meeting/Study Rooms

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



The Mars Area Public Library Board of Trustees extends its sincere gratitude to the members of the Strategic Planning Committee for their time, dedication, and thoughtful contributions throughout this process. We are also deeply thankful to everyone who took the time to complete the Library's community surveys and participate in in-house discussions, sharing their perspectives and ideas for the future of the Library.

Special thanks are extended to the staff of the Mars Area Public Library for their openness, professionalism, and willingness to share insights on how to continue improving services for our patrons. We are grateful as well to the Friends of the Mars Area Public Library and our municipal partners for their continued support, collaboration, and commitment to the Library's success.

Finally, we thank our patrons and the greater community for their engagement, trust, and ongoing support. With this shared input and support, the Mars Area Public Library is well positioned to move forward with a clear vision and a strong commitment to meeting the evolving needs of our community.

