

Shelter Island Public Library

Long Range Strategic Plan 2024-2029

Mission Statement

The library's mission is to provide state-of-the-art resources, services, programs and technologies that meet the current and evolving needs of the community, and to foster life-long learning on Shelter Island. The library's staff and Board of Trustees focus on developing educational, cultural and entertainment programs for all sectors of the community. Critical resources include adequate space, excellent staff, up-to-date technology and year-round, open access to programs, services, materials and media.

Vision

The library is our community's cultural and knowledge center, recognized for its unique and critical role in meeting the diverse needs of patrons of all ages, visitors and residents alike.

Community Service

Early History

The Shelter Island Library was founded in 1885 to facilitate the circulation of 280 volumes gifted by Eben Norton Horsford, a former Harvard professor who became, through marriage, Lord of Sylvester Manor. The donated books were made available to the public at the Old Store, which also functioned as a telegraph station, post office and community meeting place.

Recent History

The land upon which the current library stands was donated by the Tuthill family and a group of Shelter Islanders, including Andrew Fiske of Sylvester Manor, along with members of the Lions Club, who raised the funds necessary to complete construction of what is now the Shelter Island Public Library, dedicated in August 1965.

The adjacent Bateman Road property was acquired in the early 1990s with funds from the Friends of the Shelter Island Public Library that were earmarked for the library’s future expansion to meet the needs of the growing island community.

Current Demographics

According to the 2020 census, Shelter Island has a population of about 3,250 full-time residents, reflecting a 36% increase over the last decade. Notably, the island’s population more than doubles to an estimated 8,400 to 10,000 during the summer months. Age distribution skews toward an older demographic, in keeping with national trends, and overall educational attainment is well above national norms.

As of June 2023, 3,079 Shelter Islanders are library cardholders. Over the preceding year, patrons checked out almost 50,000 items, viewed over 23,000 downloads and attended 1,000 programs, either at the library or on Zoom. Also in June 2023, the community approved the undertaking of a Renovation and Expansion Project at the library by an almost 2 to 1 margin in an island-wide referendum.

Plans are being developed and refined in advance of building a new library addition to facilitate program and service provision enhancement for patrons of all ages. Although the construction project will be a necessary priority over the period of the current strategic plan, the library is committed to continuing to adhere to the broader principles and comprehensive goals that will serve the institution’s stated mission.

Board of Trustees

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Values

The library deems the promotion of life-long learning as key to ensuring the health of the community.

The library embraces the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion and strives to provide equal, open access to all members of the community.

The library upholds the right to privacy, confidentiality and mutual respect for all patrons and visitors.

The library is committed to keeping the community up-to-date on technology and other topics essential to fostering a strong sense of competency and connection among patrons.

The library prioritizes sustainability and accountability in all its practices, including (but not limited to) energy use, financial and operational decision-making and site management.

The library prizes its employees and strives to maintain a work atmosphere that honors individual strengths, encourages creative cooperation and supports professional development, including advanced education.

Goals and Action Plan

Goal One

To realize the community's vision for a renovated and expanded facility that will meet the needs of Shelter Island's growing population across all age groups.

Action Plan

- 1) Collaborate with patrons, staff and architects to devise plans that maximize functionality, aesthetic integrity and value.

- 2) Engage construction management, financial and legal services to ensure optimal efficiency and effectiveness throughout the process.
- 3) Seek financial support for project from grants and private donors.
- 4) Communicate regularly and clearly with the public to keep the community fully apprised of the project's progress.
- 5) Minimize interruption of service provision during construction.

Goal Two

To sustain and enhance current service provision to foster life-long learning.

Action Plan

- 1) Through consultation with patrons and staff, develop the collection and other resources (programming, technology, 'library of things,' etc.) to maximize public engagement and satisfaction.
- 2) Facilitate participation of staff and trustees in educational workshops sponsored by national and local organizations such as ALA, SCLS, etc.
- 3) Partner with other cultural and social institutions in the community, along with the Friends of the Shelter Island Public Library, to identify and cultivate potential synergies.
- 4) Liaise with Shelter Island School administration and faculty to support achievement of k-12 educational goals.

Goal Three

To promote 21st century literacies, including information and media literacy skills, technology and digital literacy skills and cross-cultural communication skills among patrons and staff.

Action Plan

- 1) Acquaint patrons with current tools for accessing information available through the library and provide training in the use of these databases for research purposes.

- 2) Familiarize patrons with new technologies and provide problem-solving and practice sessions to facilitate confident, secure use of various computer software programs.
- 3) Encourage and facilitate training to familiarize staff with innovations in information and digital technologies as well as support higher education in library sciences.
- 4) Develop programs that foster cross-cultural understanding and appreciation, such as ESL and foreign language conversation groups.

Goal Four

To lead by example in the quest to minimize environmental impacts, promote sustainability and boost community resilience.

Action Plan

- 1) Take steps to advance green technologies, including solar power, state-of-the-art waste disposal, electric vehicle charging stations.
- 2) Educate patrons and staff through programming about local initiatives and broader efforts to protect the environment.
- 3) Enhance capability of serving the community in the event of an emergency.

Goal Five

To make the library the vibrant hub of community life, by embracing the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion and creating an atmosphere of mutual respect that is welcoming to all.

Action Plan

- 1) Provide programs on a broad variety of topics that will appeal to the widest audience.
- 2) Expand non-traditional offerings, including ‘Library of Things,’ Seed Library, maker space, etc.
- 3) Strategize how best to engage with islanders currently unconnected with the library, among young adults, working parents, homebound

elderly, newcomers to the island, etc. and grow the number of cardholders.

- 4) Offer meeting space to professionals and groups of all sizes.
- 5) Generate data through future patron surveys, analysis of current usage metrics, etc. to ascertain community's service 'wish list.'

Conclusion

The next five years will be an exciting period for the Shelter Island Public Library as it strives to meet the needs of our growing community by renovating and expanding the current building. The Board of Trustees and library staff pledge to communicate thoroughly and effectively to inform the public fully of the project's progress.

At the same time, the goals and action plans outlined above will continue to shape and drive the library's effort to serve patrons with the highest standard of excellence. The library upholds above all the principle that life-long learning is crucial to maintaining the health and vitality of the community. It is the institution's honor and privilege to function as an essential wellspring of knowledge and connection for Shelter Islanders.