

**Schenectady County Public Library (SCPL) Long Range Plan of Service  
2020 - 2023**

**2020 - 2021 Summary/Evaluation of Goal Accomplishments**

The Schenectady County Public Library System (SCPL) serves a population of 154,604 (2015) with the Central Library and 3 branches in the city of Schenectady as well as branches in the communities of Duaneburg, Glenville, Niskayuna, Rotterdam, and Scotia. Chartered as a municipal library, funding is provided through the Schenectady County Legislative budget. The Friends of the SCPL provide funding for enhancements to the library in the areas of resources, programming, and facilities. Successful grants and donations add to library financials.

**Mission Statement**

The mission of the Schenectady County Public Library is to meet our community's informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs by providing free and open access to a comprehensive range of materials, services, and programs. A Trustee must act in good faith, and in the best interest and goals of the Schenectady County Public Library.

**Vision Statement**

The Schenectady County Public Library strives to be the first choice for information and the center of knowledge for the community. The Library System enriches the entire County by providing excellence in library service, empowering individuals, families and children from the many diverse communities in Schenectady County. The Schenectady County Public Library creates opportunities to participate, connect and discover by:

- Ensuring freedom of access to information
- Anticipating and meeting changing needs of our diverse communities
- Assuring equitable access to the library's resources and services
- Promoting literacy in all its forms
- Encouraging lifelong learning
- Providing spaces and resources for people to come together as a destination center
- Developing partnerships in the community in support of our vision and goals

The Schenectady County Public Library Board of Trustees is using the correlates of the Vision Statement as goals for planning. A ninth goal has been added centering around compliance concerns. Ongoing work is being done to maintain a strong library presence in the community as reflected by the goals.

**Note:** In 2020, the COVID-19 virus disrupted library service to Schenectady County. All branches were closed early in the year, online resources only were available, and staff was reassigned to help the County with emergency services until such time as a reopening protocol could be put in place. Later in the year, curbside pick-up was begun; branches were opened with limited hours as per Schenectady County guidelines. The long range plan summary for 2020 reflects this. SCPL administration and staff went above and beyond to help the community with

library services as best as could be done under the circumstances; this should be recognized as one reads the 2020 evaluation of the plan.

In 2021, SCPL began a partial reopening and after Labor Day scheduled hours in order to be in alignment with the NYS regulations as the Central Library for the Mohawk Valley Library System. A hybrid system of in person and online remained for programming and meetings.

**Goal One: Ensure freedom of access to information.**

- **The SCPL will provide diverse resources in various media formats.**

2020 - In March when New York State government closed all libraries, patrons were allowed to sign out materials that could be kept for the duration of the library closure with no accumulation of fines. Online resources were made available via Overdrive/Libby and Hoopla. These platforms have materials for all ages which means children learning at home had reading materials to continue building their literacy skills. Schools made available the technology necessary for virtual learning so these resources should have been accessible to all. Instant cards were set up as well so that all citizens could download these materials. As the year progressed, patrons could reserve materials, be assigned a time for pick-up, and retrieve items via curbside pickup. Reservations could be made at open branches for computer use and other technology needs. WiFi was available outside library branches for the community to use.

2021- Resources expanded for more online ebooks for all ages. This was a result of the needs of remote learning and the suspension of curbside pickup. A summer survey of the community indicated that participating patrons largely come to the library for currently published items. Collection development addresses this. Computer use time was restored and then expanded. Adult Services Director Mary Ann Warner uses her skills as a certified data carpentries instructor to assess collections, evaluate usage across the system to encourage better selection decisions, and also to assist in data transfers related to digital content access.

- **The Planning Committee will revisit the technology plan annually to ensure up-to-date technology for patrons and staff is included in the library budget.**

2020 - The Technology Committee met to discuss the impact of the budget constraints on the purchasing of new equipment and services. The reduction of branch access by the public put a strain on the WiFi as users congregated in library parking lots and grounds to access broadband for school and recreational purposes. In addition, the County's use of the library as a hub for some other County functions put a strain on existing bandwidth. For these reasons, the committee identified increasing the broadband signal to accommodate the needs of its users as high priority. Replacing older computers and related equipment was also impacted by budget constraints and the reduction of physical access to library branches. Although computers continue to age, which drives

the need for replacement, they are also experiencing less wear and tear as branches were either closed or had reduced hours. The Tech Committee decided to lower the priority of replacing computers on a regular basis, continue to monitor each computer for performance and in-warranty repair, and replace them as needed and as the budget permits. Related equipment, such as printers and networking devices will be upgraded at all branches as they have reached or exceeded their lifespan. Color printers at all branches will replace monochromatic printers as patrons have requested and as color printer costs have come down over time. Although the Pandemic has affected the budget and the use of, and need for, technology at SCPL, the Technology Committee continues to balance the needs of its patrons and staff with challenging budget conditions.

The audio visual systems at the Niskayuna and Rotterdam branches were enhanced early in the year. Security cameras to be updated.

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**Goal Two: Anticipate and meet changing needs of our diverse communities.**

- **The SCPL trustees, staff, and partners will ensure that library services and resources meet the needs of the community recognizing diverse cultures, languages, ages, and abilities.**

2020 - See Goal One. In addition, library administration and staff deployed to help with call centers coordinating food and other services along with County agencies. Karen Bradley noted that many calls came from familiar SCPL patrons.

2021 - The McChesney Room was identified as the viable option to set up computers for county residents in need of a means to register for a COVID-19 vaccine. KBJ was used as the initial Vaccine POD for the County Health Department and continues to be a POD site on Sundays. Staff and volunteers including library board members were available to help residents. The KBJ branch was identified as an early voting site. The Youth Services summer reading program held activities in parks throughout the County ensuring that they were accessible to the community if transportation was an issue. Recognizing the connection between access to books and literacy, the STARS program resumed distribution of diverse young children's books at SiCM and Schenectady County Public Health's WIC office in July. Additionally, STARS distributed books and literacy activity kits to 150 families through the Schenectady County Public Health's Early Intervention program in May.

- **The SCPL will continue to collaborate with other community organizations to help meet this goal.**

2020 - Karen Bradley and Devon Hedges handed out winter wear to the community at Vale Cemetery in conjunction with the County Health Public Service project. The library kicked off a Schenectady Strong 2020 Community Art project in collaboration with C.R.E.A.T.E Community Studios and Kids Art Festival. The Karen B. Johnson Branch served as an early voting place for the primary and general election. The McChesney Room and other meeting rooms at the Johnson Branch also served as a site for the Grand Jury during the COVID shutdown. The Schenectady County Manager's office asked us to collaborate and participate in a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services that will provide Wi-Fi access in the Mont Pleasant area of the city and would enable the library to loan out "hotspots" to those areas of the county where there is also limited access. SCPL along with other area organizations was a sponsoring agency for an anti-racism program and culminating event with author Edie Glaude interviewing via teleconference.

2021 - The staff continued to do contact tracing for the County as time allowed. The Bornt Branch was used as a pop-up vaccine POD for the County Health Department as was the KBJ Branch parking lot on Sundays. As the vaccine moves children ages 5-11 the McChesney Room is being used as a POD. Assistant Director Hedges attended a Long Term

Care Picnic representing the library. The antiracism initiative continues with the library as a partner. The Dreams of Equity initiative held a series of programs at the library including a presentation by Jason Benitez and a writing project led by Miki Conn. Book talks were also conducted at library branches to go along with this study. Copies of the community read book *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E. DuBois were available through the library. Karen Bradley and Kaela Wallman represented the library at the Schenectady City Juneteenth celebration. Mont Pleasant Branch served as the presentation site of an award to city officials by Assemblyman Santabarbara for the Craig-Main Connection initiative. S.C.I.M. had a summer lunch program at library branches. Various branches served as summer cooling stations.

**Goal Three: Assure equitable access to the library's resources and services.**

- **The SCPL needs to evaluate the hours of operation and staffing for each SCPL branch.**

2020 - Evaluation will be done as the library re-opens and the budget concerns are realized. Administration also needs to follow the NYS guidelines on re-opening which will affect hours and staffing at this point going forward.

2021 - The cleaning staff was brought under the supervision of the library administration. As the library reopened, staffing needs were evaluated and request to fill orders were placed with the County.

- **We will conduct a feasibility study assessing service delivery to differently-abled patrons.**

2020 - Due to closure, this was not completed as planned with focus group meetings. The staff has taken the closure opportunity to re-assess collection priorities and update space and funding allocation to meet demands more effectively.

2021 - With many of the programs conducted virtually, those unable to come to the library were able to participate. This opens up potential to continue to provide access to those in living facilities and the homebound. This applies to children's programming for those with transportation issues in coming directly to a branch. This also allows for the consideration of maintaining a hybrid format to include the differently-abled.

**Goal Four: Promote literacy in all its forms.**

- **The SCPL will implement the Family Place Library model at the Hon. Karen B. Johnson Library.**

2020- This is tabled until such time as SCPL recoups from the COVID shutdown.

2021 - Implementation of the Family Place Library model is on hold pending staff hiring and temporary services budget for 2022.

- **The SCPL will maintain literacy partnerships with other community organizations.**

**2020-** Kaela Wallman reached out to various organizations for grants for the STARS program including the Schenectady Zonta Club. Stewarts presented a \$1000 grant to the Mont Pleasant branch to honor a grand opening of a store and awarded the Woodlawn Branch a \$1000 grant also. A MVLS Foundation Dream- and-Do grant of \$1000 was received. SCPL collaborated with C.R.E.A.T.E Community Studios and Kids Art Festival allowing the community to share via writing or other visual means feelings about the challenges of the global community.

**2021 -** The Youth Services Department received a MVLS \$4,000 grant for seven of the branches that paid for summer outreach to the community and programming needs stemming from the pandemic. Zonta Club granted \$5,000 (submitted to the Friends account) for the STARS program to continue year-round at WIC and SiCM.

- **The SCPL will continue to promote all forms of literacy.**

**2020 -** Much of the literacy programs were put on hold due to the system being closed. A summer reading program for all ages was conducted with virtual sessions centering around story times, craft and STEM projects, and presentations by community experts. Grab-and-go bags of supplies were put together to be used with online virtual workshops for children. Teens were also provided with age-related programs. These virtual programs continued even when branches began a limited opening. Story walks in local parks were set up in which stories were turned into illustrated posters able to be read by park visitors. Staff effectively used social media and the library website to update the community on new purchases and progress in reopening. Initiative was taken to keep the community enriched with programming even though in-person events could not be held.

**2021 -** The story walks continue in various county locations. The Schenectady County ABC Hunt was conducted throughout the county. The summer youth program conducted diverse programs as did the teen writing program. A Youth Services newsletter promoting activities is sent out on a regular basis to communicate with the community.

#### **Goal Five: Encourage lifelong learning**

- **The SCPL will continue to provide a variety of cultural, educational, and recreational programs to individuals of all ages.**

**2020 -** See Goal Four. The Friends offered the noon programs via Zoom and promoted it through email blasts, their newsletter, and Events Calendar. Looking toward the 2021 winter programming, Great Discussions and Beat the Snow will be conducted in a similar manner.

**2021** - The noon programs coordinated by The Friends continue in hybrid fashion; the Reels program has resumed; Beat the Snow music concerts, a Friends initiative, were held. An adult programming librarian is in place with programs planned including a late Fall author program. A survey was conducted by the adult services librarian to gather community information on the types of programs desired going forward. The Youth Services Department conducted virtual story hours, STEM and STEAM activities via YouTube with take away kits to complete the project, Schenectady County ABC hunt focusing on various landmarks throughout Schenectady County, story walks in parks, a summer reading program with outdoor programs in various parks, and writing projects for Teens.

- **We will adequately invest in appropriate educational materials for all ages.**

**2020** - Investment was made in online materials that could be accessed by the community so needed especially by families with virtual learners. The Friends reopened the used books stores and organized 5 smaller sales in order to add to the access to materials.

**2021** - The Friends of the Library provided funding for an updated collection of materials at the Woodlawn Branch. Through the survey conducted by the Board Planning Committee, community members indicated a main reason for coming to the library was for the new and popular books. This showed a need for continuous spending to ensure an adequate collection for all branches in this area. The Friends contributed revenue for additional purchases of digital content since limited access to the print collection was available all year.

**Goal Six: Provide spaces and resources for people to come together as a destination center.**

- **The SCPL will conduct an annual branch library facilities review.**

**2020** - Due to the Coronavirus, the 2020 facilities walk through was not done as all buildings were closed. This will continue in April of 2021.

**2021** - This was conducted in May of 2021.

- **Based on the facilities review a project plan will be developed to address identified needs.**

**2020** - Status of construction projects is as follows:

**Mont Pleasant** - Construction project of new library and parking was totally completed including punch list, paving, and re-construction of the 6th Street entrance.

**Woodlawn** - Paving project is complete.

**Rotterdam**

**2021** - Potential reconfiguration project with no additional money is needed.

**Niskayuna**

**2021** - Potential parking lot reconfiguration and handicap accessibility.

No other projects will be recommended to the Finance Committee. Cleaning of windows and carpets were done as per schedule in 2020 and will be on hold until 2021 finances unfold. Second floor renovations on hold indefinitely.

**2021** - **Status of construction projects is as follows:**

**KBJ**- A beautification project was completed around the building using Esther Swanker bequest funds to clean and add landscaping. The damaged window in the children's area was replaced.

**Scotia** - The addition is projected to be completed by the end of 2021 as well as the rehabilitation of the building including new furnishings. The new roof is completed.

**Woodlawn** - **2021** - Inside and outside renovations are completed.

**2022** - **Projected Projects:**

**Glenville, Niskayuna, Quaker St., Rotterdam and Scotia** - upgrading of LED lighting fixtures

**Niskayuna, Quaker St., and Rotterdam** - HVAC systems upgrade

**Rotterdam** - Floor replacement Audiovisual equipment, computer systems and computer peripherals in support of technology plan

**Woodlawn** - Roof replacement

• **We will provide safe, clean spaces for our staff and patrons.**

**2020** - Up to the COVID closure, the Safety Committee met addressing strategies to ensure the safety of staff, patrons, and facilities. Training of staff to handle various situations is recognized as a priority need. The Safety Committee also met in planning for the reopening including addressing concerns such as contact tracing, maximum occupancy, following state guidelines, and safety incidents that might arise. Reopening demands sanitizing all aspects of the library which will follow guidelines and for which new policies were written. Carpet cleaning and window washing is an ongoing goal for each branch as well as custodial maintenance.



2021 - The Policy Committee wrote an extensive reopening plan for all branches taking into consideration the handling of materials, cleaning, and staff confidence that a safe work environment exists. This was created taking into consideration the guidelines from local and state agencies. Security officers are assigned to the KBJ, Mont Pleasant, and Bornt branches on a regular basis. The cleaning staff is now under the direction of the library administration allowing for more direct contact as to what needs to be done at the branches to keep them clean and maintained. Devon Hedges worked with PESH for building safety risks. The Bornt Branch carpets were cleaned in June.

- **We will solicit feedback from each community branch in order to access needs.**

2020 - On hold as all branches were closed.

2021 - The Branch Committee resumed meetings in the Fall. Focus groups that have been discussed being held at each branch are on hold until staffing and COVID stabilizes.

**Goal Seven: Develop partnerships in the community in support of our vision and goals.**

- **The SCPL will continue to develop relationships with other community organizations in order to meet its goals.**

2020 - See Goal Two.

2021 - See Goal Two

- **The SCPL will strengthen these relationships in order to expand its resources.**

2020- As part of the County Call Center, library administration and staff directed citizens to proper help and services needed during the COVID shutdown many of whom were recognized as library patrons. Work on a grant for access to the Foundation Directory Online was begun in partnership with MiSci. The Mont Pleasant branch was used as a cooling station during the summer for the residents of the area.

2021 - Cooling stations were continued during the summer.

**Goal Eight: Insure a sound financial foundation for the SCPL so that it may continue to provide materials and services to the community.**

- **We will prepare an annual budget that adequately meets the goals of the SCPL.**

2020 - Due to the consequences of the COVID shutdown, the Finance Committee built the 2021 budget within guidelines set by the County as they followed the process that has been used over the past several years. Unexpected expenses were incurred as the

reopening plan occurred. A Board of Trustees Bequest Committee was formed to plan expenditures of funds that have been left to the library.

**2021** - A budget was submitted for 2022 following the process established by the Finance Committee and library administration. Included was staffing that is needed to sustain branch hours and the revenue needed to meet the demand for materials. Advocacy was done by the administration for this budget as well as at a County Legislature meeting.

The Bequest Committee began allocating money for various projects including landscaping and clean up at the KBJ branch. Also, new bequests were received over the year.

- **We will collaborate with the Friends of the SCPL to enhance private contributions.**

**2020** - The support of the Friends will be needed as the reopening moves forward. Small books sales were held; the bookstores have reopened with limited hours with more to be added when possible to raise revenue for this year. Revenue is recognizably less than in previous years. Online sales also continue.

**2021** - The Friends revenue raising projects were reinstated including the Spring and Fall book sales, online sales and reopening the bookstores. Several bequests were made to the Friends and generous expenditures were made to the library for materials including an allocation for the Youth Services STARS program. The Friends of the Library provides all of the funding for Youth Services and Adult programming.

- **We will assess SCPL's staffing to ensure that we meet the goals of this long range plan of service.**

**2020** - This is tabled until such time as SCPL recoups from the COVID shutdown.

**2021** - The summer survey conducted addressed the hours and days that the community would like the branches open. This and staff resignations determined the amount of staff needed to be hired to meet the minimum standards as well as the long range plan. The community members participating in the survey were complimentary about the service staff provides as well as their appreciation of the staff and the library system itself.

A Search Committee has been established in collaboration with the County Manager to find a replacement for our retiring Library Director.

**Goal Nine: The SCPL Board of Trustees will ensure we are in compliance with any NYS Library regulations.**

- **The Board of Trustees will conduct an annual policy review.**

2020 - The Policy Committee drew up a reopening policy to support the steps library administration and staff had to take and follow for resuming services.

2021- Updates to the by-laws amendments were done confirming that the number of Trustees is set at 15 appointed by the Schenectady County Legislature, 3 consecutive unapproved absences is deemed a resignation, and vacated seats will be filled by new board members for the duration of the unexpired term.

- **We will review the 2021 new standards and work to ensure compliance.**

2020- The new minimum standards will be met within the best of our ability in and around reopening. The Board of Trustees members were provided a document of the standards and the status of our compliance as well as what needs to be done to meet them. For the most part, SCPL meets these standards with delegation to committees to firm up compliance. Doug Bixler, design and marketing professional, updated the system website to meet the standards.

2021 - The library staff and board continue to follow the guidelines to be in compliance in all areas. For more information go to <https://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/ministan.htm>