

West Allis Public Library Strategic Plan 2026-2030

INTRODUCTION

For over a century, the West Allis Public Library has existed to enhance the community, inspire imagination and transform lives. The public library is the heart of the community and plays a vital role in providing information, engagement and cultural enrichment.

The WAPL Vision Statement emphatically attests to the role of the Library by “Fostering an Educated, Engaged, and Enriched Community.” Further, the Library Team’s mission, to provide a welcoming environment for all, offer equal access to Library services, promote personal and professional growth, build and maintain community partnerships, and inspire lifelong learning - points to the importance of the public library in a healthy community. WAPL and all public libraries act as great levelers – where all visitors are welcomed, services are provided to all who seek it, and equality the benchmark for every patron.

A Strategic Plan serves as a road map for any organization intent on identifying and successfully carrying out goals and visions to positively impact and augment those for which it serves. Similarly, a group of staff and board trustees from the West Allis Public Library embarked on crafting a blueprint that will provide guidance to ensure success in the coming years. The process commenced in April 2024 with a commitment to identify and organize a Library Strategic Plan that would seamlessly mesh with that of the City of West Allis. Through a process of engagement with staff, citizens and other community stakeholders, committee members were able to identify the following points that make up the core of the plan:

- The Library growing as a center of importance and vitality in the City of West Allis
- Collaboration with business, schools, and other City departments
- Engagement through a strong commitment to community outreach
- Opportunities which offer dynamic and diverse programming for all ages
- Make available quality resources and access for all library users
- Manage Library collections to maximize use and reflect the needs of our community
- Ensure that WAPL takes a leadership role with digital and technological opportunities
- Continue to remain sensitive to and adapt services for the changing needs of the community
- Balance local control, and a firm identity while participating in a county library system
- Ensure that a motivated, engaged Library Team exists to carry out the principles of the plan

THE PROCESS

The planning process to update an expired plan began in April 2024 and concluded with the West Allis Library Board of Trustees approving the Strategic Plan on October 22, 2025. In between, there was a great amount of work completed by the Strategic Planning Committee that encompassed all community stakeholders, Library staff, and of course citizens.

The committee met monthly and mapped out a process that would engage as many stakeholders as possible, and also take into account the City of West Allis Strategic Plan. It was imperative to the committee members that the goals of the Library compliment those of the City as well as other municipal departments.

Some highlights of the process include:

- A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis by Library staff and the planning committee.
- Community surveys conducted at a number of Library Outreach events as well as online and in-house opportunities
- Surveys of community stakeholders asking how collaboration and partnerships could be strengthened
- Studies of City demographics to gain a better understanding about diversity and outreach opportunities

The process produced clarity for the committee as to what core elements need to be addressed in the plan. Additionally, the Vision and Mission of the West Allis Public Library coincides with the primary goal of providing the best possible Library services to our community. With a strong strategic plan in place, the West Allis Public Library forges a commitment to our users as well as to the community as a whole.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Every successful organization listens to those who use or benefit from it. The Library is no different, and great appreciation goes out to the many individuals who took the time to complete surveys and provide invaluable feedback. Without their input, it would be nearly impossible to gauge what elements are necessary to continue to meet the needs of citizens.

Thanks as well go out to the staff of the Library for continuing to help identify ways to provide excellent services. One of the constants of a healthy public library is its ability to continue to adapt to growth and change within the community. It is imperative that the Library Team embrace change, be responsive and remain dynamic. The West Allis Public Library Team has demonstrated such skills and has placed itself in position to carry out the principles of this plan.

Much appreciation is also extended to the West Allis Public Library Board of Trustees for their strong commitment to the role that the Library plays in the community, and their support of the staff. Each Board member brings their own knowledge and experience to the fore that allows the Library Team to carry out daily goals and achieve success.

Finally, a sincere thank you to the Strategic Planning Committee for devoting extra time, energy, ideas and devotion to a process that will guide the West Allis Public Library forward.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Emily Rutter, Supervisor of Adult and Circulation Services
Claire DeRocheFort-Reynolds, Supervisor of Children's Services
Barbara Hart, Library Board Member
Michael Koszalka, Library Director

LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Jamie Arneson, Board Vice President
Amelia Bursi
Angie Collings, West Allis-West Milwaukee Schools Representative
Barbara Hart, Board Financial Secretary
Cathy Manthei
Darren Rausch, Board President
Jody Rymaszewski, Board Secretary
Elizabeth Suelzer,
Alderson Ray Turner
Amy Hutter

WEST ALLIS PUBLIC LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT

We are committed to:

- *Providing a welcoming environment for all*
- *Offering equal access to Library services*
- *Promoting personal and professional growth*
- *Building and maintaining community partnerships*
- *Inspiring lifelong learning*

WEST ALLIS PUBLIC LIBRARY VISION STATEMENT:

Fostering an Educated, Engaged, Enriched Community

Strategic Plan Goals and Activities 2026-2030

Library Environment:

GOAL = Create a welcoming and safe environment that results in high satisfaction

Activities:

- Improve signage throughout the building and complete implementation of digital signage
- Refresh the building with paint and carpeting as budget allows
- Refurbish the atrium pool space
- Study the feasibility of adding or expanding public study rooms
- Consider a space study be conducted by a design company specializing in public libraries
- Explore adding Keri doors (keycard) to first floor and Administration office access
- Improve lighting around the exterior of the building

Library Collection:

GOAL = Strive to develop a diverse collection that reflects users' information, educational and entertainment needs

Activities:

- Expand the "Library of Things" collection to include board games and other materials
- Continue to evaluate formats within the collection and explore opportunities to add new formats

Marketing:

GOAL = Promote our services to connect with the Community

Activities:

- Work to modernize an interactive and dynamic library website
- Create and implement a distinctive library logo and brand
- Continue to utilize Social Media platforms to better market available Library services and engage with the community
- Utilize digital signage to market services
- Promote the Library by continuing to be visible at community events
- Collaborate with the City's Marketing and Engagement Department whenever possible
- Partner with the MCFLS Public Information Coordinator when relevant

Outreach and Programming:

GOAL = Engage the Community

Activities:

- Continue to nurture and develop partnerships with community entities
- Work to identify and expand Library outreach opportunities
- Diversify program offerings to reflect community interests and needs
- Promote the Library as a community space

Services:

GOAL = Understand needs of Library users and strive for exceptional service to our community

Activities:

- Work to strengthen membership and advocate for the Friends of the West Allis Public Library
- Remove barriers to service by making WAPL a fine free library
- Play a leadership role in prioritizing early literacy and life-long learning throughout the community
- Provide instruction and guidance on digital resources

The Library Team:

GOAL = Foster a dynamic, positive, and supportive community of colleagues driven to exceed our user's expectations

Activities:

- Continue to plan and coordinate an annual Library Team training day
- Ensure Library staff contributions are properly acknowledged and celebrated
- Craft a customer service policy

Technology:

GOAL = Remain responsive to the needs of our users and ensure that the proper tools for success and engagement are available

Activities:

- Explore the feasibility of expanding the automated sorter and maximize use of the current system
- Continue to evaluate hardware, software and other platforms to ensure ease of use and accessibility
- Evaluate the use of tablets to replace the Online Public Catalog Computers