

CARSTAIRS PUBLIC LIBRARY

PLAN OF SERVICE 2021-2025



APPROVED BY THE TOWN OF
CARSTAIRS LIBRARY BOARD
FEBRUARY 16, 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Firstly, the Town of Carstairs Library Board Trustees would like to thank the staff and community partners of the Carstairs Public Library for all their hard work and dedication over the past 5 years. Without the commitment and enthusiasm of our remarkable group of staff, volunteers, and Friends, we could not have made the last 5 years this successful in meeting and, in some instances, even exceeding our last plan of service goals. In 2018, our library was the proud recipient of the Minister's Award for Public Library Service in recognition of our Annual Parenting Fair. This yearly community event, hosted by the Carstairs Public Library, demonstrates how a library can partner with the greater public to create community connections, provide family resources, and even advocate for our public libraries.

Secondly, this Board would like to recognize this same group of staff, volunteers, and Friends for rising to the challenges of 2020. It was a difficult year, but we are grateful to everyone for making the best of this situation and continuing to formulate innovative ways to still serve our community – safely and with grace.

During these unprecedented times, we were challenged with the task of planning our next five years of service and we hope we rose to the occasion. Looking forward, our Board is excited to build upon our past success, newly created opportunities and innovations, and future vision. We, the Town of Carstairs Library Board of Trustees, are pleased to present herein, the 2021-2025 Plan of Service for the Carstairs Public Library - a plan of growth for the Carstairs Public Library and one of service to our great community.

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DON SPEERS

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TRUSTEE



ABOUT THE PLAN OF SERVICE

The Alberta Libraries Act charges library boards with providing "comprehensive and efficient service" to their communities, while allowing for adaptability and responsiveness to unique needs. The Plan of Service is both a legal requirement and a strategic tool for the Library to be responsive to the needs of the residents it serves. The Plan of Service must be updated every 5 years and contain a mission statement, along with goals and objectives, based on a needs assessment of the municipality served by the board.

To this end, the Town of Carstairs Library Board formed a committee to gather community member input and develop a plan. The Covid-19 pandemic meant the feedback had to be collected digitally, instead of having a large community gathering. The committee created a needs assessment survey that was promoted through a community mail out, social media advertising, email to community leaders, and posters throughout the community. We had 74 community members respond to the survey.

We also conducted "Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threat" (SWOT) surveys with key stakeholder groups, such as volunteers, the Friends of the Library group, Library Board members, and staff members. The committee also put together an environmental scan to provide a current snapshot of our community.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

MISSION

A place to connect and inspire through ideas, programs, resources, and technology.

VISION

To engage the mind, strengthen the community, and enhance the quality of life, by being the gathering place of our dynamic community.

MOTTO

A Place for Everyone

VALUES

Welcoming, Responsive,
Engaging, Innovative,
Accessible

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The purpose of the Environmental Scan is to provide a snapshot of our community, our library, and our services, at this moment in time.

Carstairs is a growing community. According to the 2016 census data, the town has seen a very steady rate of growth (at about 14% over it's history), however, this rate is currently in a period of slight acceleration.

Our community has a very even age distribution, so we have a good range of ages represented in our community.

Family households are fairly evenly split between those with children and those without. We have an average household size of 2.6 people, with a high percentage of home ownership, and a very low amount of rental homes.



A large portion of our population are Canadian citizens, and many have been here for over 3 generations. We've had only 10 new immigrants between the 2010-2016 time period. The majority of homes speak English. In our community 2% of families identify as a visible minority, and 4% identify as First Nations, Inuit or Metis. According to the 2016 census the average rates across Canada are 20% of the population identifies as visible minorities and 5% identify as First Nations, Metis or Inuit.

When it comes to income statistics, Carstairs is close to the Canadian average for median incomes, but below average for the percentage of the community that is considered low income. Currently, 6-10% of our community is considered low income; therefore, we have some needs in this area.

The Education and Occupation data from the census shows that much of our community has some post-secondary education, and we have a good range of skills and backgrounds. There is a fairly even distribution of occupations in the community. Trades are the highest, closely followed by sales and service. The strongest trend in occupations shows that the vast majority of people commute outside of town.

It should be noted that this information does indicate that recent economic trends, and the Covid-19 pandemic, may impact our community in many ways.

WHAT DOES YOUR SUPPORT OF THE LIBRARY MAKE POSSIBLE?

**IN 2019
CARSTAIRS
PUBLIC
LIBRARY
HAD**



1,671
members of the
library



24,513
people came
through our
doors



19,849
visitors to our
website



2,100
hours open per
year



We added **1,546** new items last year.
Bringing our collection total to **22,722** items.
We checked out **2,950** e-Content items.

45,411

items were checked out last year!

We have **4** dedicated staff and over
34 amazing volunteers!



Our Library Board and Friends of the Library are always
looking for new volunteers.

We have **7** computers that were used for
3,497 hours.



There were also **14,447** connections to our Wi-Fi.

**WE OFFER
PROGRAMS
AND
CLASSES
FOR
EVERYONE**



83
programs for
kids



140
classes for
adults and
seniors



127
events for
families.



8,150
people
attended
programs



The health of our civilization, the depth of our awareness about the underpinnings of our culture and our concern for the future can all be tested by how well we support our libraries. — Carl Sagan

S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

The Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat (SWOT) analysis gives a solid picture of our current state, as well. Under strengths, key trends indicated that our staff, resources, and current programs are true areas of strength. Our collaboration with community partners, such as our Friend's group and Parkland Regional Library, were also mentioned as a strength for our library.

When we examined weaknesses, one major trend indicated that our current building location and size is a limitation on our ability to grow. In conjunction to this, our current hours may restrict our growth as well.

Another major challenge, is that people continue to have an outdated perception of what libraries are. Finally, limitations to technological tools, due to our smaller budget as a small library, provide further challenges.

On a positive note, in our opportunities, we see that using our staff's energy and skills, along with relationship building and developing new programs, can be areas where we can create growth.

The major threats identified were if we were to experience a loss of funding, due to either economic change or political change, or the loss of any of our strong community partnerships and relationships. The lack of community awareness of the library and what we do, may also present a threat; in addition, we may find the fast pace of change that exists in our world today could present threats.

This S.W.O.T. analysis was performed just as the Covid-19 pandemic was developing, but the impact of this situation will have impacts on us going forward, and should be considered.

STRENGTHS

- Our staff & available resources
- Current community partners
- Friends of the Library group
- Relationship with Parkland Regional Library



WEAKNESSES

- Building location away from the town centre
- Current hours are limited
- Community perceptions of libraries as outdated



THREATS

- Loss of funding if economics shift
- Loss of community partners & relationships
- Lack of community awareness
- Fast pace of change



OPPORTUNITIES

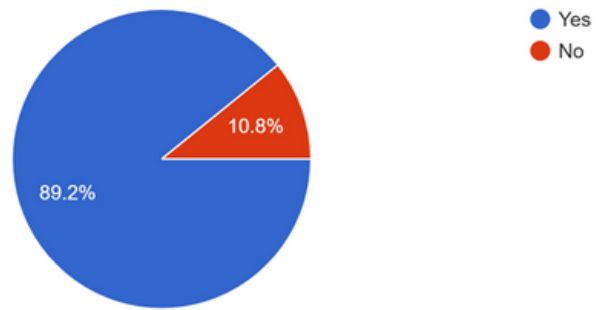
- Staff energy & skills
- Relationship building
- Developing new programs
- Close proximity to school

NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESULTS

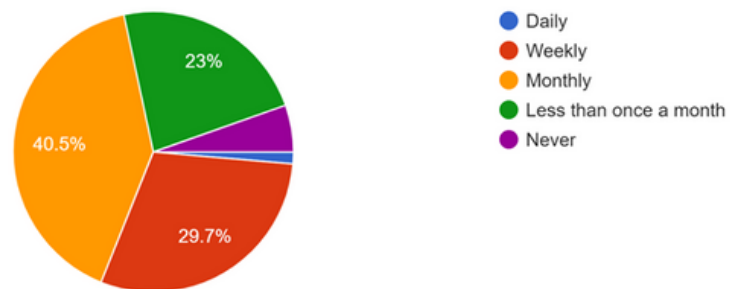
Our Needs Assessment survey ran from July through to the beginning of September. The survey was designed using Google forms and modelled after a community needs survey provided to us by Parkland Regional Library. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we were unable to host any in-person events, so an online survey was our solution. The survey link was mailed out in the July Town of Carstairs utility bills, as an insert. The survey was also promoted through our Social Media pages, website, a direct email campaign to community leaders, and posters around town.

We had 74 community members participate in the survey, which gave us a good cross section of information about our community's needs. 89% of participants had a library card, and many visited at least once a month. However, we were especially glad to hear from those without cards or those who didn't visit regularly, as their perspective adds depth to our survey.

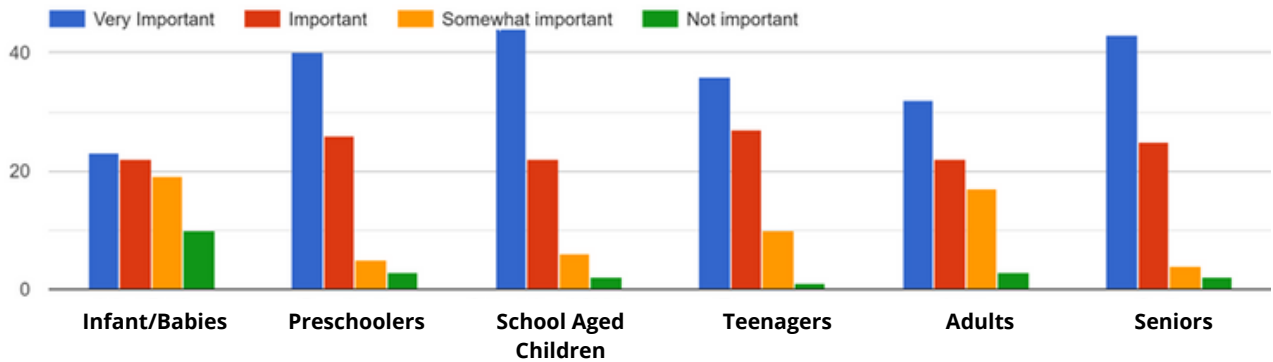
Do you, or members of your household have an active library card?
74 responses



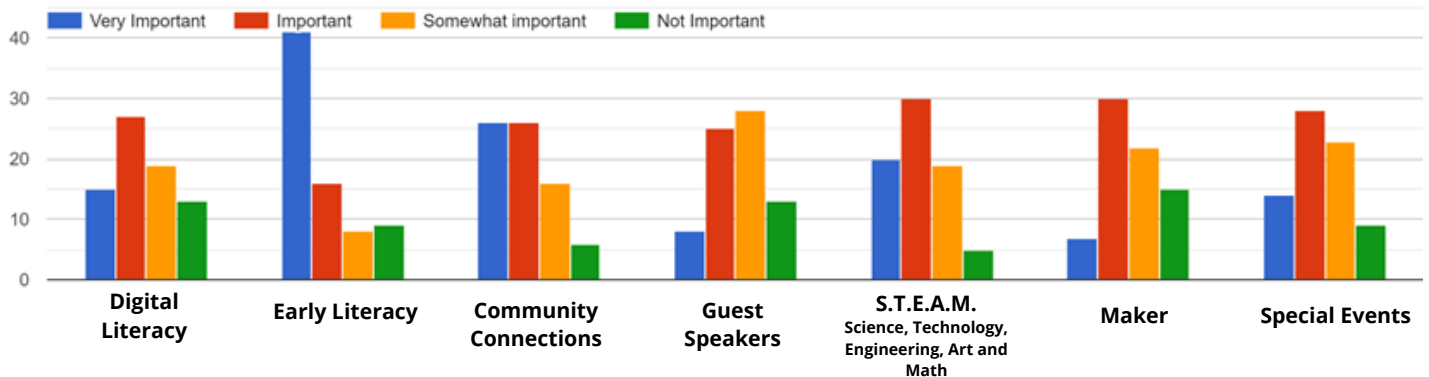
On average, how often do you visit the library?
74 responses



How important is it to have programming for the following groups?



How important are the following types of programs to you?

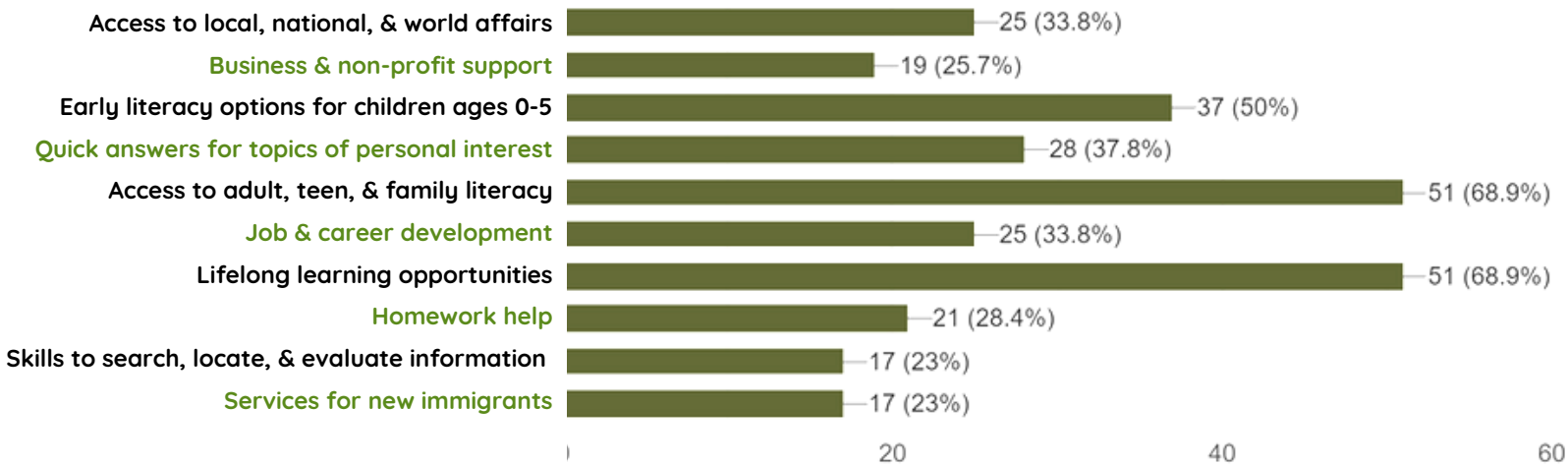


PROGRAMS & SERVICES

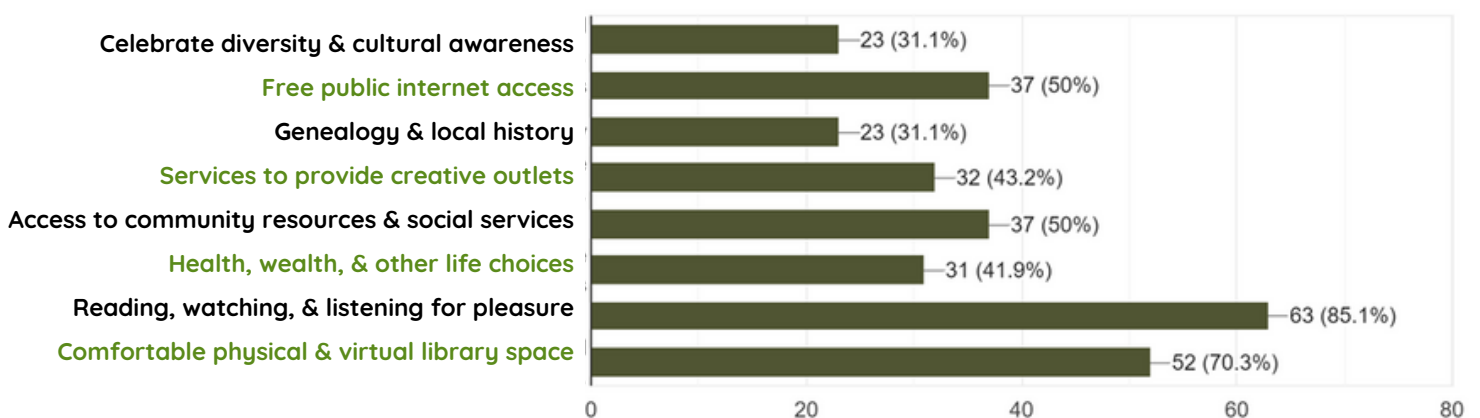
We asked survey participants about programs they felt community members would like to see, and for what age groups. We had an open answer section, where community members could provide more detail about what they saw as needs in our community for learning and leisure activities.

We also asked participants to provide feedback on our current services, collections, and programs, so that we can incorporate growth into our plan of service.

The library promotes both learning and leisure. Which of the following LEARNING pursuits are most important to you. Check all that apply.



The library promotes both learning and leisure. Which of the following LEISURE pursuits are most important to you. Check all that apply.



IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

The above two questions encapsulated a lot of the other responses on our survey and framed the responses into a library context. We used this information to inform our major goal areas. All the other information gathered was used to create the objectives and measures for each goal.



GOAL 1: GROW LITERACY

EARLY, CHILD AND TEEN LITERACY

The Carstairs Public Library will support families in developing literacy skills for all area children. Children from birth to age 5 will have programs and services designed to ensure they enter school ready to learn to read, write, and listen.

Children and Teens will have the support they need to improve their literacy skills, in order to meet their goals and succeed in school.

We will create fun programs that get kids and families reading. For those reading on their own, we will offer incentives for them to keep reading, in order to help children become capable and strong readers.

Objective 1: The library helps every child in Carstairs start Kindergarten ready to learn, through a suite of preschool programs, parental supports, and home reading incentive program.

90% of families attending preschool programs indicate on annual program surveys that the library plays an important role in helping children develop a love of books, reading, and learning.

75% of area preschool children participating in our preschool programs by 2025.

Objective 2: Carstairs children and youth have the supports they need to become strong learners through year round program options, including Summer Reading Club, Young Writers conference, and Homework supports

80% of students indicate on program surveys that they use the library to meet their learning needs.

80% of students indicate on program surveys that they have increased their enjoyment of learning.

That we see a 10% increase by 2025 in youth participation in library programs.



GOAL 2: SATISFY CURIOSITY

SUPPORT LIFELONG LEARNING

The Carstairs Public Library will support our community in lifelong learning pursuits. We will have the resources community members need to explore topics of personal interest and to continue learning throughout their lives.

This will include learning opportunities, guest speakers, community partnerships, and more, that help support our community in their personal learning goals.

Objective 1: Carstairs area residents will have access to programs, services, and opportunities for job hunting and career development.

By 2025, we see a 10% increase in people attending programs for career and job supports.

90% of people surveyed at these programs, indicate that the program helped them learn a new skill.

Objective 2: All people will feel empowered to pursue their passions and find a community with similar interests. The library will serve as a hub for community discussions, support, and learning through facilitated speakers, information nights, and discussion groups.

80% of library users surveyed annually, report that they use the library for lifelong learning.

By 2025, we see a 10% increase in adults attending library programs.

80% of people surveyed will be satisfied in the number and variety of programs that support lifelong learning.

80% of people surveyed will agree that they feel connected to their community and engaged in thoughtful discussion after these programs.



GOAL 3: STIMULATE IMAGINATION

READING, VIEWING, AND LISTENING FOR PLEASURE

Residents who want materials to enhance their leisure time will find what they want, when and where they want them, and will have the help they need to make choices from among the options.

We will have a welcoming space that is comfortable for community members to spend time in. Our space will be filled with a well curated collection of materials and resources to support our goals.

Objective 1: Carstairs library will provide a comfortable and welcoming presence, available to the community, both in person and online.

15% growth in library cards, library visits, and program attendees by 2025.

80% of people surveyed annually indicate the library is a safe, welcoming, comfortable place to visit, and that the assistance they receive from staff is excellent.

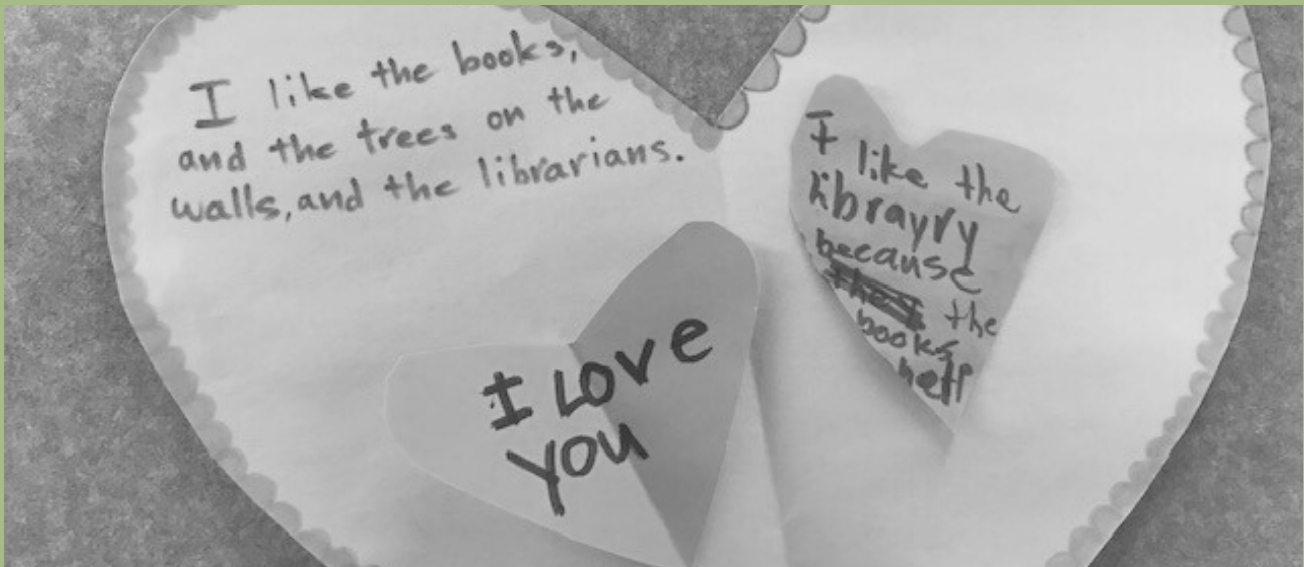
Objective 2: We will provide access to the books, DVDs, and digital collections that library members want.

The library will increase the turnover rate of all print collections by 15%.

We will allocate 10% of our library material budget towards digital collections.

75% of library members surveyed annually will respond that they find something to read, view, or listen to for pleasure, and that the collection of materials is very good to excellent.

Local authors and creators will be supported with a Read Local Collection, display space, and program opportunities.



GOAL 4: EVERYONE'S AN ADVOCATE

SPREAD THE NEWS ABOUT THE LIBRARY

Residents, visitors, and community stakeholders are informed about library programs, services, and events. The Library Board, Staff, and Friends of the Library are actively promoting the Library, by participating in community events and partnerships. We pursue media opportunities and keep advocacy at the core of our work.

Objective 1: Develop and implement an Advocacy Plan to raise awareness and knowledge of Carstairs Public Library.

1. Maintain an Advocacy Committee consisting of board and staff.
2. Provide an advocacy report at each board meeting.
3. Staff and/or Board members will participate in a minimum of 2 community meetings or events per month.
4. Seek out new media outlets and partnerships.
5. Inform the Town and County councillors of library events.
6. Increase membership and value of the Friends of the Library and the Library Board, by establishing a stronger connection between the groups.