

Canaan Town Library Strategic Plan 2022-2026



Our Mission: Inform! Inspire! Innovate!

This plan has been approved by the Library Director and Board of Trustees on 03/21/2022.

Amy Thurber, Library Director
Angela Robinson, Chair
Kathleen Peters, Secretary
Derek Herro, Treasurer
Cheryl Junker, Trustee
Susan Nero, Trustee

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Introduction

The Canaan Town Library has had a long and illustrious history and in recent years has enjoyed prominence as a cherished community resource in the midst of downtown.

Library History

The Canaan Library was founded in 1804. During the 1800s, the Library moved from house to house. In 1893, with Town Meeting appropriation of \$25, the Library made its home at the Whitney residence on Canaan Street. In 1903, the town voted to spend \$100 to prepare the Academy Building on Canaan Street for Library use.

The Library moved to its present home in the Canaan Community Building in 1978. A significant downtown focal point, this building has been home to the Canaan Municipal Court, the Canaan School hot lunch program, the Canaan Players, a private kindergarten, a recreation center, and town offices.

From 2003 until 2011, the Library underwent many renovations and upgrades for safety, efficiency, and comfort. In 2011 we celebrated the grand opening of the spacious, comfortable, and very functional, newly renovated Canaan Town Library. Included in the plans for the physical space of the newly remodeled Library were many considerations for new technology and new ways the Library could serve its patrons.

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Strategic Plan: People, Place and Platform

The emerging values of public libraries are built around three key assets:

People: Our community has several groups of people including:

- Current Library users
- New residents of Canaan
- Current resident non-users
- Retirees
- Housebound seniors
- Commuters/Working people
- School-aged kids and Teens
- Churches and congregants
- Business leaders
- Artists
- Job seekers
- Families with children
- Homeschooling families

Goals for attending to the people of our community and beyond include:

- Being more available to patrons, especially in regard to technology assistance.
- Increase community connections
- The Library Director and Staff will strive to meet patrons with their own language, recognize their needs and communication preferences, and not take for granted that they understand library jargon.

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Place: We recognize that the size of the physical space of the Library is a challenging fact, but not a limiting one. The Library's "Place" is more than the building on Main Street.

We plan to increase utilization of:

- Physical library
- Social media
- Online presence

And better utilize community spaces and partner with:

- Town meeting rooms
- Senior Center
- Churches
- Town Meetinghouse
- Public Schools
- Cardigan Mountain School

Goals include continuing to make the library a safe space for the public. This can be achieved with some enhancements:

- New secure display case for the front lobby
- New shelves, new layout, new table for the lower level library space
- Enhanced physical security for lower level library space
- People counter at front door
- Maintain energy efficient windows for lower level library space
- New Book Drop Box
- New Projector for movies, presentations
- Third Floor Renovation

Canaan's library is much more than a place to borrow books. It has been a space that has served to build bridges across different groups in our community. We have tirelessly served our schools and our seniors. We have served as a gathering place and a public space for taking classes, studying, staying publicly informed and creating. Historically, the vision of this building has been to serve the community, and it was built in 1924 by the Knights of Pythias for this purpose.

We would like to continue the tradition of serving our community by renovating the third floor of this public building to be used by the public for a meeting space, a work space, and include a small educational kitchen and bathroom facilities. An elevator and remodeled front space would be required. Comments on a recent survey indicate that the current entrance and elevator are intimidating for some patrons.

In addition to the funds that the Friends of the Library and the Library Trustees already have, we would obtain funding from outside sources.

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Platform: The library platform is to be user-centered, providing opportunities for individuals and the community to access a variety of tools and resources with which to discover and create new knowledge. It enables the curation and sharing of the community's knowledge, resources, and innovation. It is interactive in facilitating people individually and in groups. It supports the learning and civic needs of the community.

Goals for our platform:

- Maintain visibility: newsletter, website, Facebook, summer reading programs Outreach to caregivers, schools, Senior Center, Canaan Rec
- Increase non-traditional materials: Passes, Caboodles, STEAM kits, Craft tools.
- Current collections will continue to be scrutinized for use and weeded accordingly in an effort to open up more space for other things. Library administrative space will also be evaluated for efficiency, storage and ease of use and access.
- Use of "Hot Spots" for patron checkout to enable internet access
- EBSCO (online databases, magazines, ebooks...)
- Continue deliveries of materials in collaboration with Senior Center, Meals on Wheels, and local schools
- Online educational materials
- Satellite platforms/community
- Additional Little Free Library stations (Canaan Street Beach)
- Classes/Help Sessions on how to use e-devices, streaming, podcasts Potential courses for academic credit

Having the third floor space renovated would allow for unlimited multifunctional activities for groups and individuals: movie showings, trivia/games, exercise class, demonstrations, study space...

We are acutely aware of the busy lives people lead, and want them to know the Library can be available in some form around the clock.

Conclusion

Funds and space continue to be a challenge for the foreseeable future. Library staff will continue to be counted on to devise and implement many of these goals, with Trustees and Volunteers to assist. We are confident that innovative thinking can turn our ideas into reality, allowing Canaan Town Library to become more diverse, mobile and connected.