

Westerly Library & Wilcox Park

Strategic Plan

2023-2027



WESTERLY LIBRARY
& WILCOX PARK

Foreword

Westerly Library and Wilcox Park's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan provides a cohesive direction for the library and park for the next 3 years and beyond. The Strategic Plan outlines plans for community and patron focused service, accessible facilities, and enhanced features to best serve the greater Westerly-Pawcatuck area. In doing so, Westerly Library and Wilcox Park positions itself as a relevant, essential place in the community.

In this time of great change, challenges, and unpredictability across the globe, the Strategic Plan seeks not to forecast, but to prepare and position Westerly Library and Wilcox Park to adapt to changing market conditions and meet the needs and wants of its users and embraces the opportunity to change lives.

Mission, Vision and Core Values

Mission

The mission of Westerly Library and Wilcox Park is to strengthen community and enrich lives by stimulating intellect and sparking imagination through access to literature, information, technology, nature, and the arts.

Vision

Westerly Library and Wilcox Park strives to be a premier intellectual, cultural, and botanical asset for the region.

Core Values

Stewardship: We will make every effort to preserve the library and park to ensure relevance in the future with respect to our rich past.

Equitable Access: We promise to provide resources, technology, information, and facilities to all people regardless of race, sexuality, gender expression, ability, spirituality, or age.

Respect: We honor diversity, individual perspectives, and the right to privacy and confidentiality.

Collaboration: We will promote and facilitate cooperation and intellectual engagement.

Enrichment: We will strive to bring meaningful fulfillment through programs, resources, innovation, and nature.

Strategic Planning Process

In May 2022, Westerly Library & Wilcox Park (WLWP) engaged Empower Success Corps (ESC) in consulting services to guide the strategic planning efforts of the organization.

The objective of the engagement was to facilitate WLWP's strategic planning process to guide efforts over the coming three to five years. The Strategic Planning Committee, consisted of stakeholders from the library, park, and community. Members of the committee expressed their wish for a manageable yet effective strategic plan to forge WLWP's way towards a more innovative, collaborative, and inclusive future.

Information Gathering

In order to learn about our successes, areas for improvement, growth opportunities, and community impact our consultants conducted an environmental scan. The Environmental Scan consisted of research, interviews, focus groups, and surveys; specifically:

- Research on library trends, population changes, trends for parks and arboretums, review of the Town Plan, and social trends
- Interviews with eighteen (18) stakeholders identified by WLWP
- Three focus group meetings (two conducted by ESC, one conducted by the teen librarian)
- Community survey with 277 responses
- Staff survey

Key Findings

Westerly Library and Wilcox Park is very well regarded in the community and has been referred to as "the epicenter of the town" and a highly valued resource. The recent expansion of businesses and arts venues have attracted more people to the downtown area, creating valuable potential opportunities for new or expanded collaborations for WLWP. Westerly Library and Wilcox Park is particularly valued by families and is considered central to fond memories across multiple generations.

Wilcox Park is cherished by the community and will likely continue increased usage begun during the pandemic.

Goals, and Strategies

GOAL 1: STRENGTHEN FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL STABILITY

We will maintain and improve all organizational assets to ensure our longevity in the community.

Strategies

- 1: Increase funding
- 2: Create structures and processes for board and staff to ensure business continuity
- 3: Strengthen our public image through outreach
- 4: Optimize cost efficiency

GOAL 2: BE RESILIENT; BE ADAPTABLE TO CHANGE

Resilience and adaptability are key traits for survival and with an ever-changing and unpredictable future, building strategies to be able to fit the conditions we must work in is of the utmost importance.

Strategies

- 1: Prepare for the impact of climate change
- 2: Take measures to accommodate increased use of the park while protecting its
- 3: Actively pursue diversity
- 4: Be forward thinking and proactive with respect to trends
- 5: Build relationships with those who can support the organization when needed

GOAL 3: BUILD LIFELONG RELATIONSHIPS

It is in our best interest to continue to work on maintaining and building our relationships with everyone throughout their lives with us. Relationships, good relationships, are everything to us. Without our relationships we have no one to provide services to, no one to support us, and no need to exist. Good relationships with our patrons are responsive and keep them coming back; good relationships with our donors provide us with consistent financial support; and good relationships with community partners help us remain vital to the success of our Town.

Strategies

- 1: Be a community hub for individuals and families in the Ocean Community
- 2: Cultivate lasting relationships with schools and students
- 3: Engage with nonprofit organizations to enable growth and coordination
- 4: Build relationships with businesses

GOAL 4: SERVE AS THE ACCESS POINT TO RESOURCES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO ENHANCING QUALITY OF LIFE.

Westerly Library and Wilcox Park exist to enhance the lives of all. Serving as an access point, a connector, to all the information in the world, we can provide those we serve with access to opportunity, learning, and enrichment to make a positive impact on the quality of life of everyone that comes to the library and park.

Strategies

- 1: Bridge the digital divide
- 2: Make all library and park services more accessible
- 3: Become the information hub for community resources
- 4: Ensure that the library and park remain welcoming spaces
- 5: Build excitement in the community about the role the library plays in their lives

Next Steps

Using Westerly Library and Wilcox Park's mission as primary rationale, its vision as the ideal, and its core values as guides to oversight, the library and park has a continuous, consistent process that ensures accountability, versatility, and balanced decision-making.

The Strategic Plan is a dynamic and flexible map that provides Westerly Library and Wilcox Park with tools for continuous improvement. We will maintain an ongoing program of oversight, resource development, assessment, and adjustment using an action plan matrix for internal use. This will allow us to track progress, measure success, assign responsibility, identify financial resources, and mark completion. Such will be updated accordingly on an ongoing basis.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to all who helped us to develop this Strategic Plan 2023-2027

Strategic Planning Committee

Betty-Jo Cugini, Board President
Brigitte Hopkins, Executive Director
Bill Lancellotta, Assistant Director
Peg Murphy-Bright, President of Friends
Jen Brinton, Chamber Board member
Maria Bernier, Board Member
April Dinwoodie, Community Member
Mojie Friel, Board Member
Marc Garceau, School Superintendent
Shawn Lacey, Town Manager
Alan Peck, Park Superintendent
Ruth Tureckova, Olean Center

Tactic Development

Tactics were developed with the support of the Board of Trustees, and the time and expertise of members of the Strategic Planning Committee and our invaluable Library and Park Staff.

Additional Thank Yous

None of this would have been possible without the individuals and organizations who contributed to the extensive information gathering process. Your opinions and ideas informed the creation of our new plan, and we are fully indebted to you for your help. Thank you!

