Putting Your Strategic Plan into *Action*

So, you've got your strategic plan. Now what?

Michigan Library Association, October 2026

FAST FORWARD
LIBRARIES

WELCOME!



Amanda Standerfer

Founder and Lead Consultant
Fast Forward Libraries



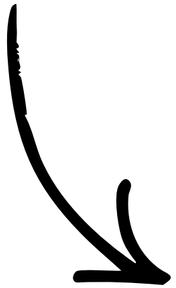


Kathleen Kwiatkowski

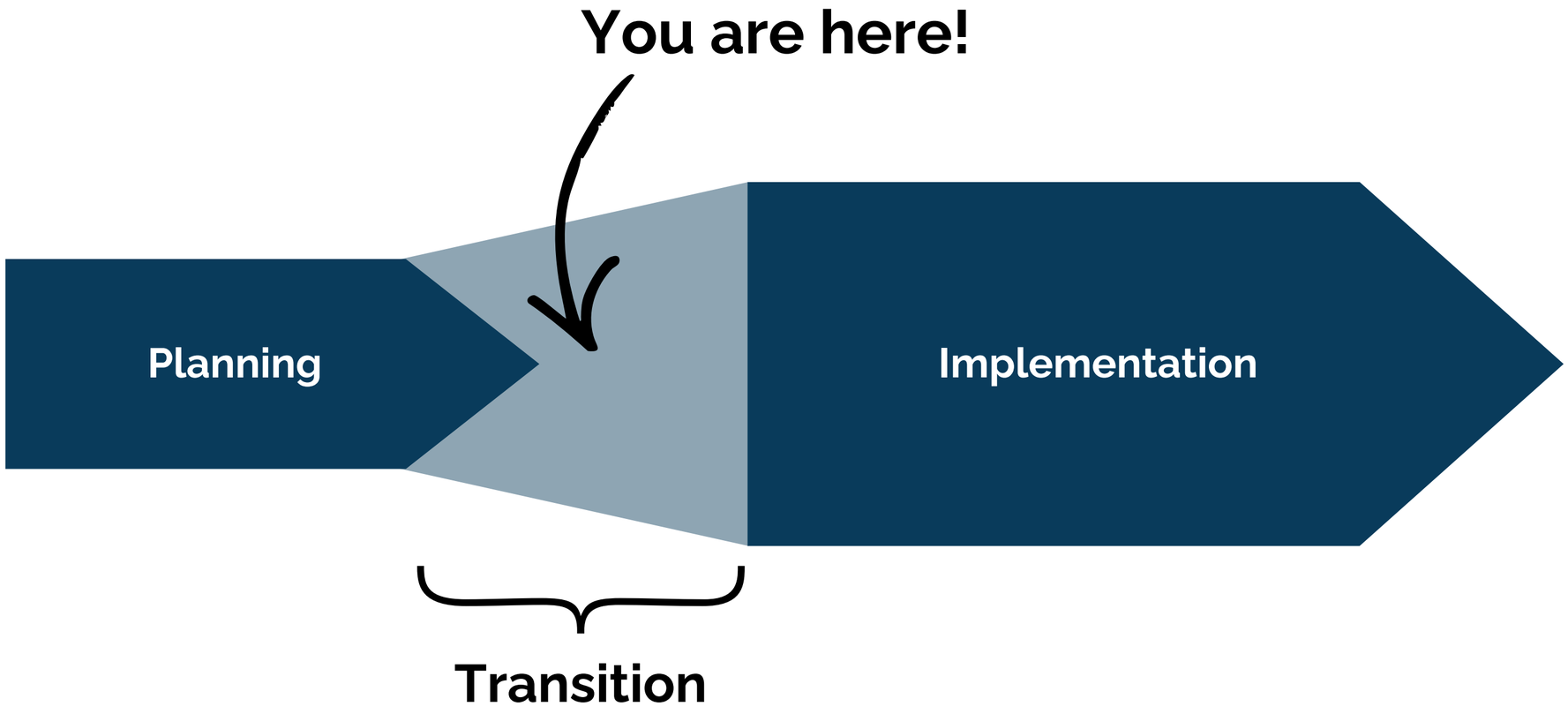
Director
Auburn Hills Public Library



WHY?



- Establishes direction and priorities
- Sharpens focus and creates alignment
- Outlines clear path and simplifies decision-making
- Allows time for reflection and grounding
- Provides sense of purpose and meaning
- Creates momentum and clear communication


You are here!
Planning
Implementation
Transition


ACTIVITY PLAN
EVALUATION FRAMEWORK
REPORTING TIMELINE

ACTIVITY PLAN

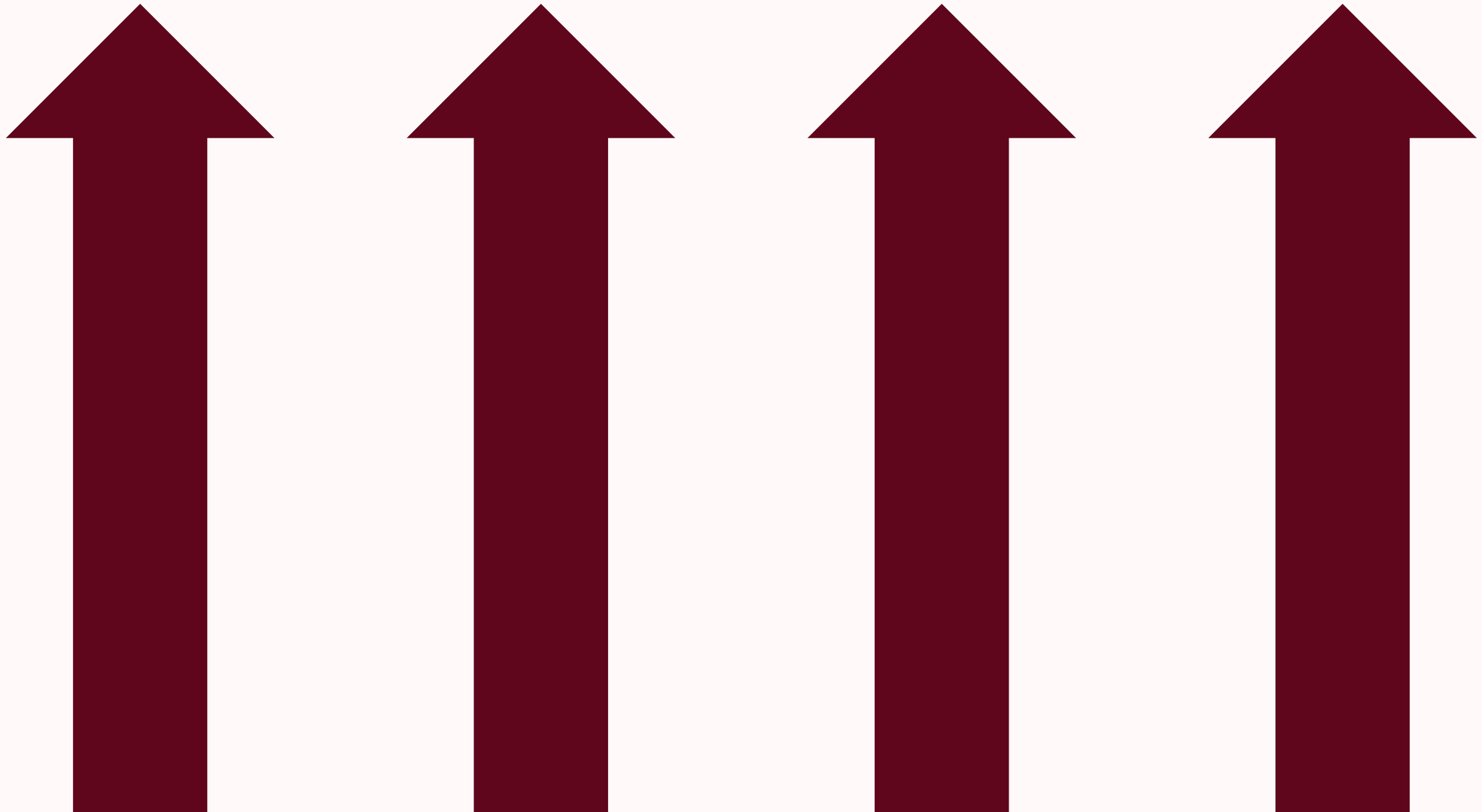
An Activity Plan is a high-level working document (or series of documents) that management teams use to track activities that will help achieve the goals of your strategic plan. It is used to guide the day-to-day work of the library.

PRIORITY

PRIORITY

PRIORITY

PRIORITY



ACTIVITY PLAN

- Not meant to replace current practices, but rather to use what you’re doing to make sure you’re successful in your implementation.
- Content is from ideas generated at Planning Workshops that align with Strategic Directions.
- Format is optional, but a good place to start!
  - Shared spreadsheet.
  - Project management.
  - Master activty plan broken out by year.

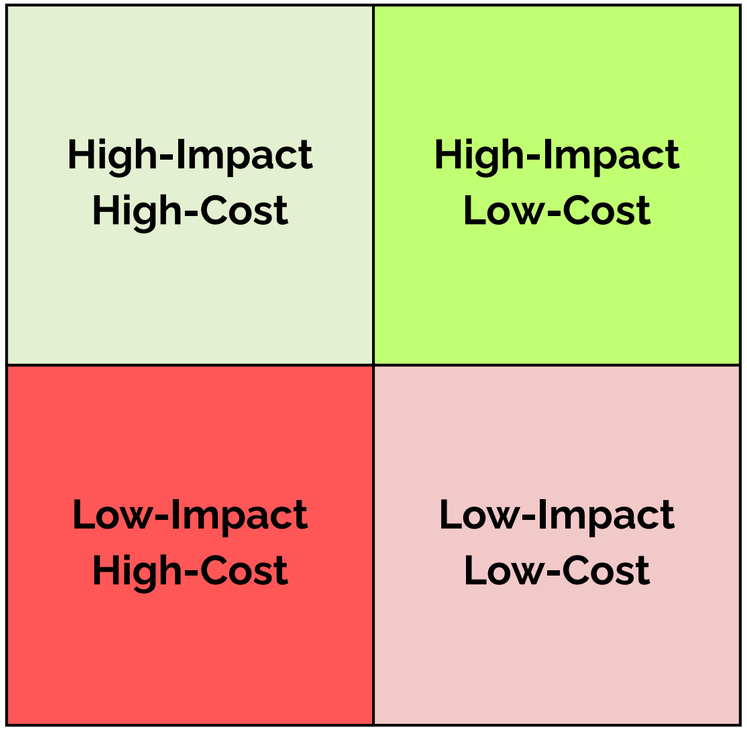
ACTIVITY PLAN

Strategic Direction

Goal:			
Activity	**Person/Group Responsible**	**Timeline**	**Update**

ACTIVITY PLAN

- Make it yours!
- Determine criteria:
  - How do you determine priorities?
  - How can we get on the same page?
  - Decision tree — budget, time, staff, impact.
  - Values statements as a filter.
  - What makes sense for you?
- Have a meeting to review... and then review again!
  - Staff input.
  - What's (actually) feasible?
  - Are tasks evenly distributed?



ACTIVITY PLAN

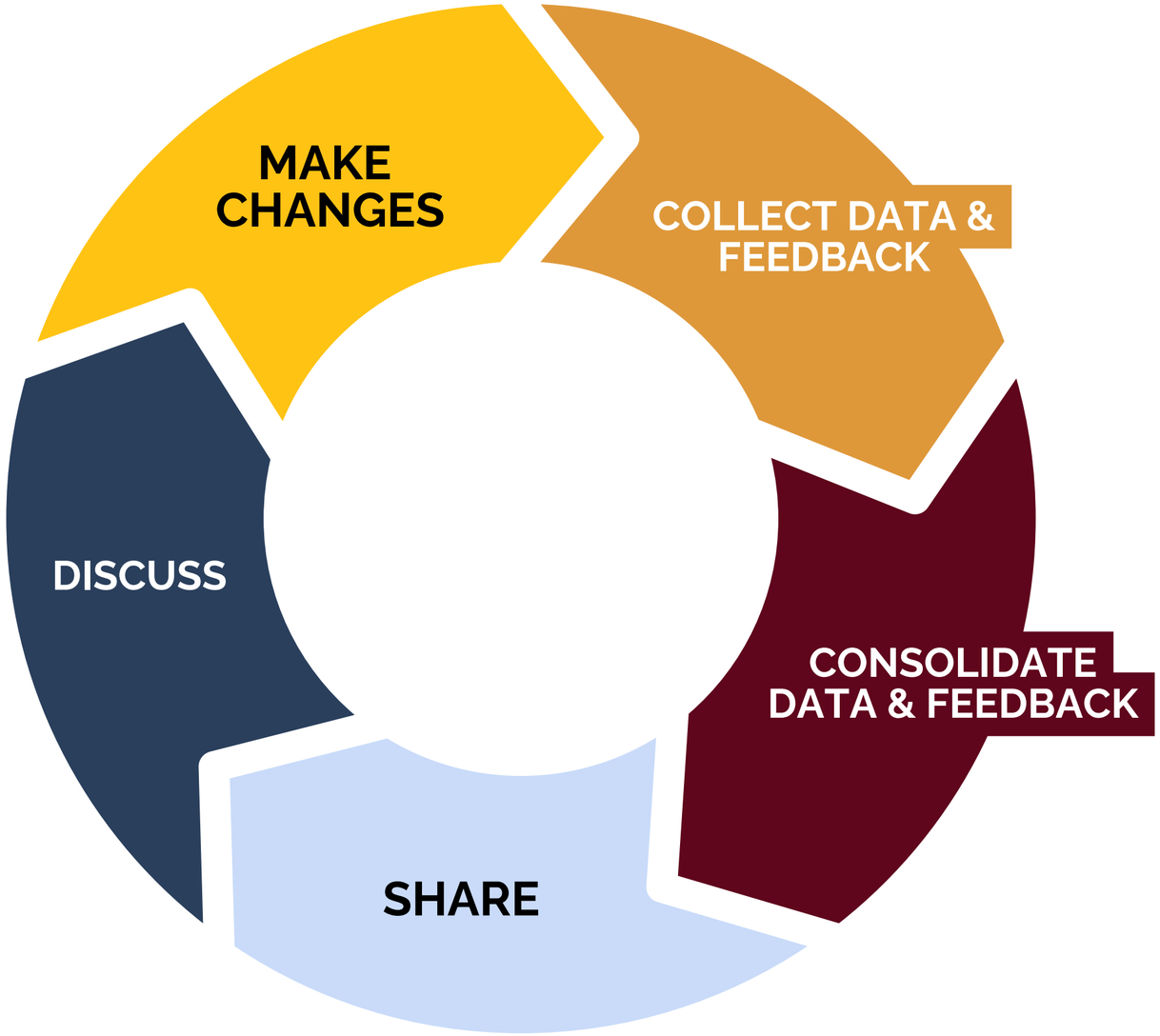
- Keep activities on there, even when they’re completed.
- Great way to share and track progress.
- Good parking lot for ideas.
- **Set up a process.**
  - Check in regularly.
  - Monitor progress.
  - Make it sustainable, doable, adjustable.

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

An Evaluation Framework is a document that lists the metrics of success which will track each activity's progress.

Evaluation can be complicated, but the goal is to evolve the way your library gathers and uses data to inform decisions about allocating resources that will help you work toward your strategic plan goals.

EVALUATION PROCESS



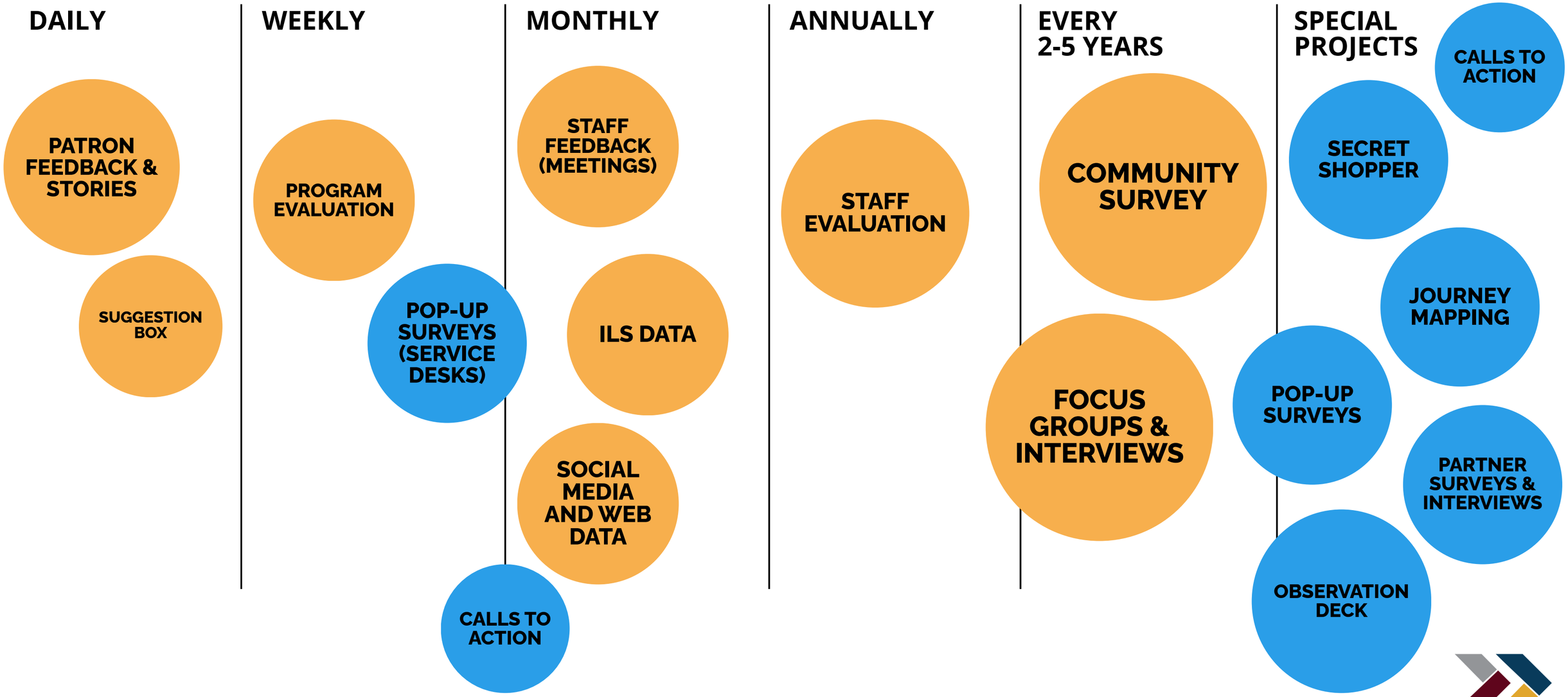
EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

- Activity Plan FIRST, then talk about evaluation.

- Holistic evaluation — show progress on a library-wide scale.
  - Once every 2-4 years
  - Community survey
  - Benchmark questions (satisfaction, strategic directions)

- Developmental evaluation — what information do we need to make changes?
  - You’re setting up a **system** for gathering feedback.
  - Data-driven decision making.
  - Don’t want to make it burdensome.
  - Once data is collected, how will it be reviewed? Used?

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK



EVALUATION FRAMEWORK: STEPS

1. Activity Plan first!
2. Decide what data you need to collect.
3. Select your collection methods.
4. Create a plan for collection and compilation.

REPORTING TIMELINE

A Reporting Timeline holds you accountable to the strategic directions and goals in the strategic plan.

It is an occasion to take a holistic assessment of the progress you've made over a certain period and to inform your stakeholders of important updates. Reports will look different for different audiences. You're most likely to share reports with your Board, your managers and staff, and your patrons and community members.

REPORTING TIMELINE

- Stakeholders:
  - Community
  - Board
  - Staff and Managers
  - Other Stakeholders (donors, Friends, who else?)
- Use your evaluation tools and get creative!

REPORTING TIMELINE

THE URBANA FREE LIBRARY

Director's Report

Date: May 8, 2025
To: The Urbana Free Library Board of Trustees
From: Rachel Fuller, Interim Director
Re: Director's Report for Board Meeting of May 13, 2025

Table of Contents

Strategic Plan Progress 1
Action Item Details & Additional Information 3
Communication 4
Library Newsletters 4
Library News 4
Budget Information 5

Strategic Plan Progress

ENHANCE We steward our physical and financial resources to serve evolving community needs that support growth and sustainability.

- This month's Board packet includes a draft FY26 budget. As mentioned in April, the proposed May budget contains changes based on items that were still in development over the past month. Most notably, $73,790 has been reallocated from the Library's Special Reserve Fund (the 803s) to Shared IT Costs (80280808 51500). This budget adjustment will allow the Library to move forward with needed technology upgrades in concert with the upcoming remodel project during FY26. Additionally, $7,500 was reallocated to Legal Services (80280801 52101) to account for anticipated expenses.
- This month's Board packet also includes a resolution with proposals from Imperial Surveillance for updating the access control server, installing three new access readers, and upgrading security cameras. The access control server and access readers will be installed during FY25, while work on the security cameras will occur during early FY26. Staff recommend approval of Resolution 2025-04.
- The Library continues to progress toward the upcoming remodel project, and the board packet includes multiple related documents and resolutions. Staff recommend approval of the resolutions for the construction and furniture proposals, which are Resolution 2025-05 and 2025-06, respectively.

- Communications & Development Manager Lyndzie Taylor presented with Kirstin Gebhart of Fast Forward Libraries at the ILA Marketing Forum 2025 Mini-Conference. Lyndzie and Kirstin presented a webinar titled, "Going Beyond Programs: Creating an Effective Newsletter that Showcases your Whole Library." The full webinar can be found on YouTube. For their presentation, skip to time stamp 3:45:00.



EMBRACE We learn about and respond to our community in order to create a welcoming environment that cultivates equity, mutual respect, and belonging.

- This April, the Library once again partnered with the Urbana School District for the Annual Battle of the Books program, where student teams compete to answer trivia questions covering a list of twenty or more books, fostering literacy and enthusiasm for books. The Library supports this collaborative project with the purchase of additional copies of books on the Battle List in multiple formats, emceeing school Battle assemblies, and emceeing the district-wide Celebration Battle at the I-Hotel.

EMPOWER We connect people with tools and resources for learning, knowledge exchange, and personal growth that leads to greater fulfillment.

- This year's Fairy Tale Ball was our most ambitious ever, with over 1,650 community members attending. The Library worked with three different University partners to create activities and decor for the event. Undergraduate theatre students designed and built sets to decorate, transforming the Library for the ball. An RST class created two popular activities for children and their families. Students in the Informatics 418 class created a quest line for children, complete with a storyline about summoning heroes to defeat a dragon. Ballet dancers from Dance Theatre of Illinois performed solos and taught dance steps, and a book fortune teller matched people with titles. In addition to these events, there were the ball favorites like dancing with the English Country Dancers.

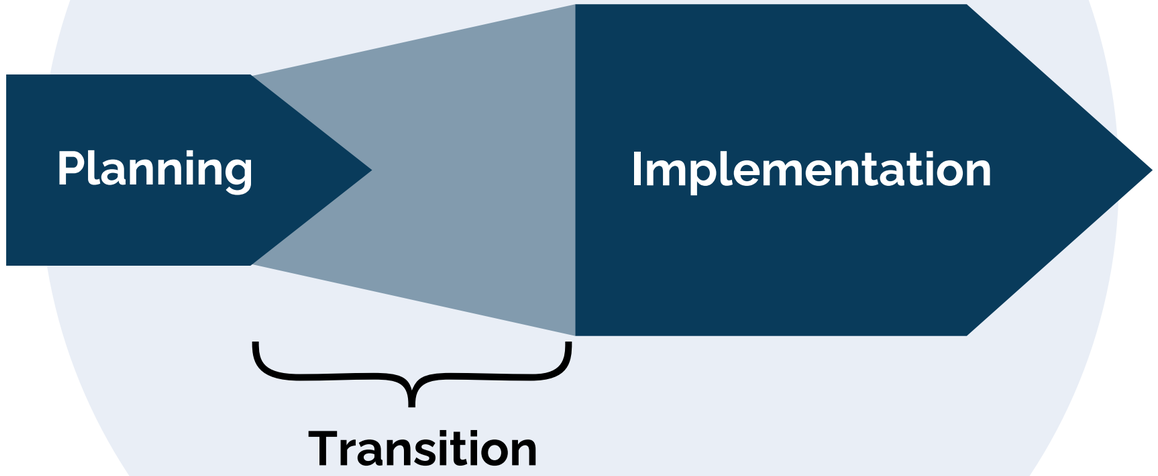


REPORTING TIMELINE: STEPS

1. Decide to whom you will report.
2. Determine the frequency and data you will be reporting.
3. Make a report template (optional).

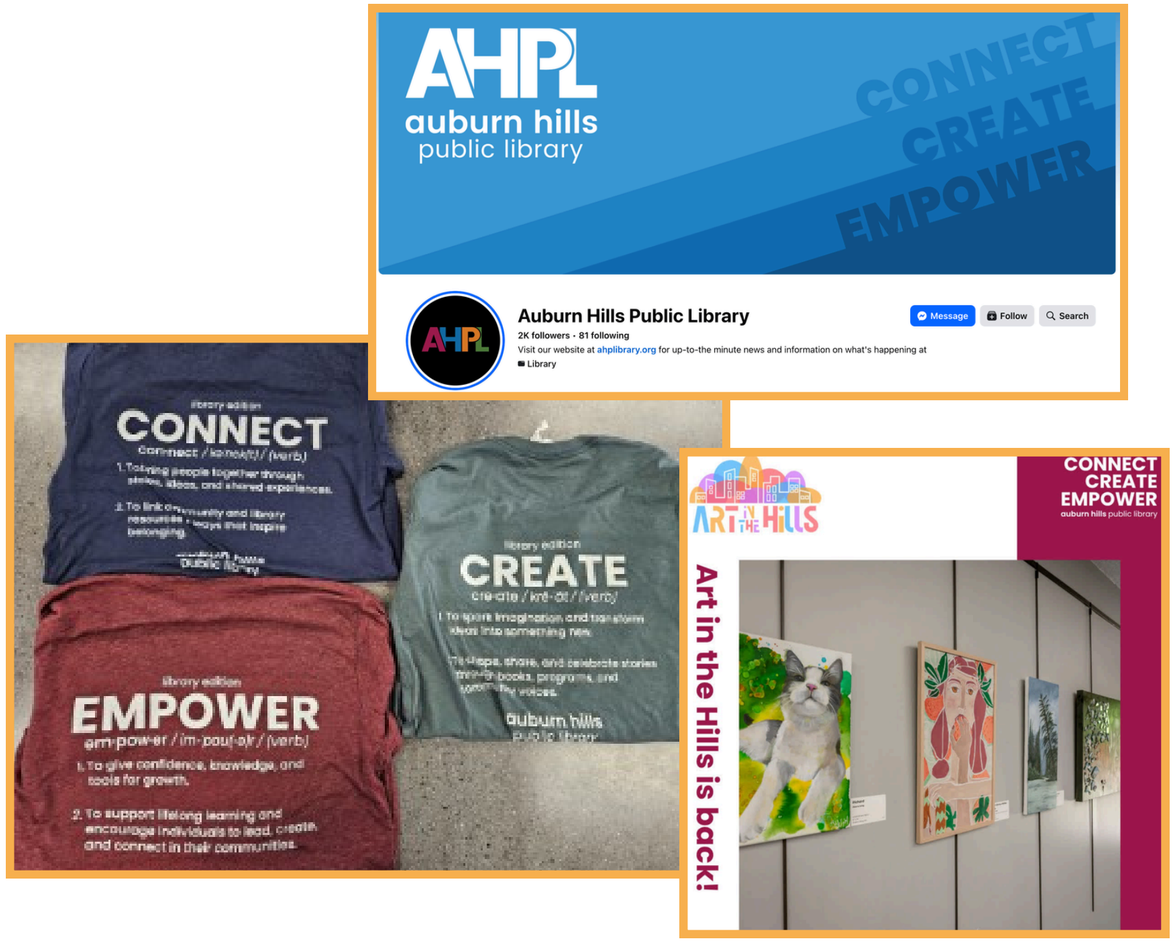
TRANSITIONING TO IMPLEMENTATION

1. Rebrand.
2. Transition from approval to implementation.
3. Developing activities, priorities, and tracking.
4. Keeping everyone involved.
5. Continuous reporting and evaluation.



REBRANDING

- Quick changes
  - Email signatures
  - Letterhead
  - Social media posts
  - Annual report
- Semi-permanent investments
  - Business cards and library cards
  - Promotional material giveaways
  - Poster/banners in the Library
  - 24/7 Locker wrap with strategic plan branding
  - New staff shirts
  - Light pole flags



Rebrand | **Transition** | **Develop Activities** | **Involving Everyone** | **Continuous Reporting**

REBRANDING — INVESTMENT

- Business cards - $1200
- Nametags - $200
- Lanyards - $300
- Banners - $800
- Staff shirts - $2800
- Tote bags - $750
- Locker wrap - $4500
- Other promo materials - $3000
  - Notebooks, pens, clips
- Library cards - $1000

Total: $14,500



TRANSITION TO IMPLEMENTATION

August 2025
Strategic Plan Approved

September 2025
Started Rebrand

September 2025
Departments met to discuss annual activities

October 2025
Staff in-service to discuss activities and priorities as a group

November-December 2025
Met with managers to finalize proposed activities

January 2026
Presented annual activities to Library Board



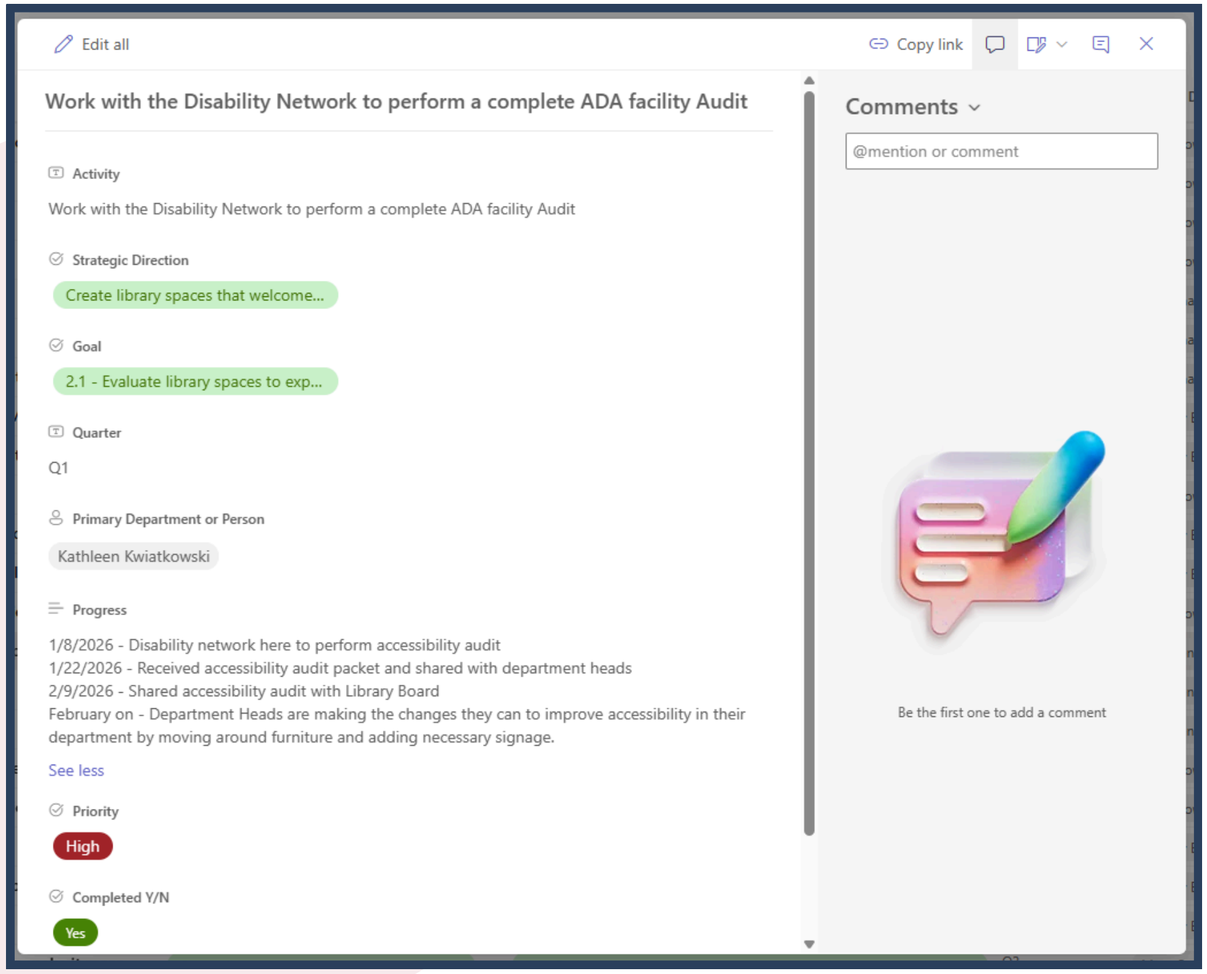
Rebrand | Transition | Develop Activities | Involving Everyone | Continuous Reporting

TRACKING WITH LISTS

2026 Activities ★

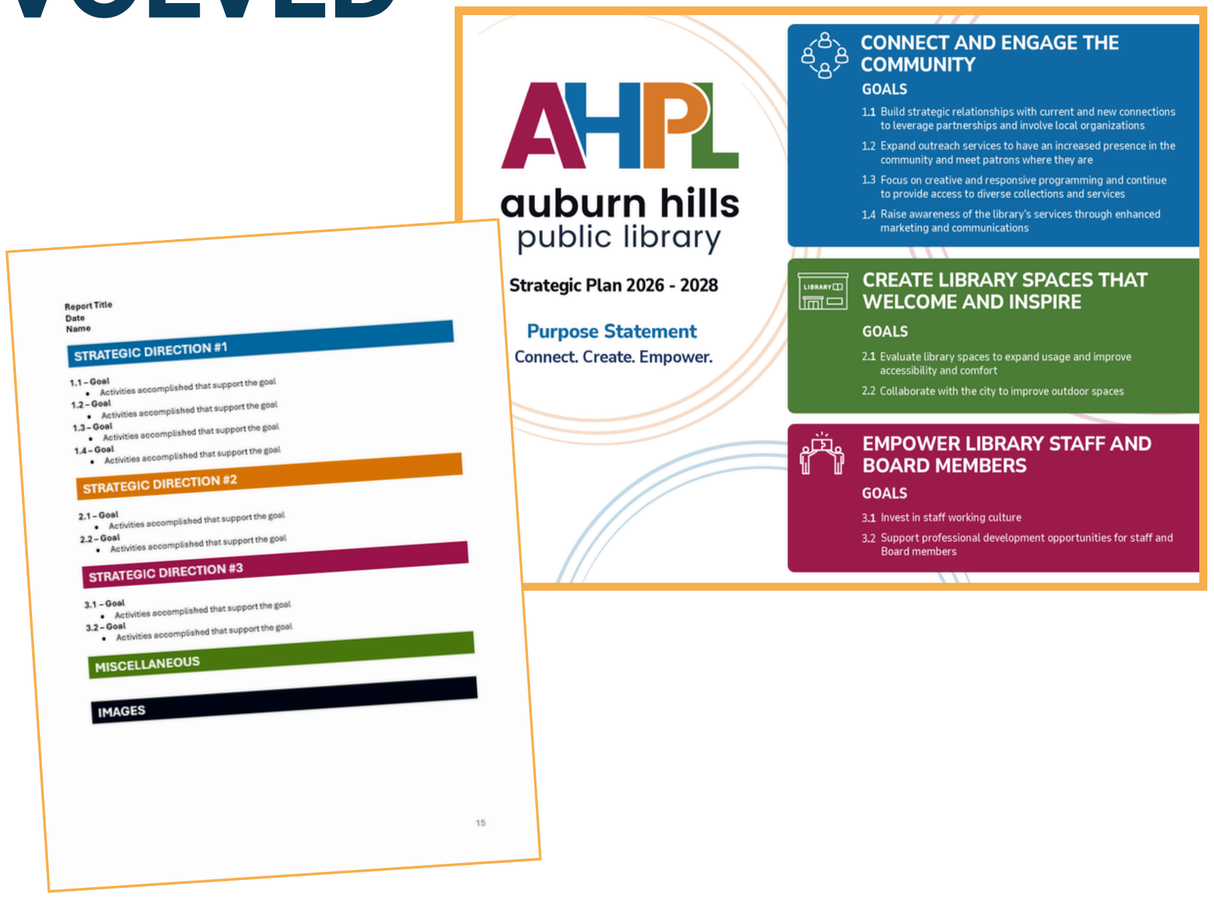
Activity	Strategic Direction	Goal	Quarter	Primary Department or Person	Priority	Progress	Completed Y/N
Hire and train a candidate...	Connect and engage the community	1.2 - Expand outreach services to have an increased presence in the com...	Q1	Mary Cowles	High	1/5/2026 - Ashl...	Yes
Youth Program and Collec...	Connect and engage the community	1.3 - Focus on creative and responsive programming and continue to pr...	Q3	Mary Cowles	Low	Setting up meet...	No
Offer more accessibility in...	Connect and engage the community	1.3 - Focus on creative and responsive programming and continue to pr...	Q2	Mary Cowles	High	Minni finished p...	No
Mini Seed Library	Connect and engage the community	1.3 - Focus on creative and responsive programming and continue to pr...	Q4	Mary Cowles	Low	February 2026 -...	Yes
Revise Patron Point camp...	Connect and engage the community	1.4 - Raise awareness of the library's services through enhanced marketi...	Q1-Q4	Christina Bowers	High		No
Why I Love My Library ca...	Connect and engage the community	1.4 - Raise awareness of the library's services through enhanced marketi...	Q1-Q3	Christina Bowers	High		No
Develop branded off-site ...	Connect and engage the community	1.2 - Expand outreach services to have an increased presence in the com...	Q1	Christina Bowers	Medium	February 2026 -...	Yes
Refine Home Connections...	Connect and engage the community	1.2 - Expand outreach services to have an increased presence in the com...	Q2	Lindsey Ellison	High	June 2026: Book...	No
Introduce a newspaper su...	Connect and engage the community	1.3 - Focus on creative and responsive programming and continue to pr...	Q1	Lindsey Ellison	Medium	January 2026 - ...	Yes
Start circulating a Tonie c...	Connect and engage the community	1.3 - Focus on creative and responsive programming and continue to pr...	Q1	Mary Cowles	Medium	Amanda ordere...	No
Develop a post program s...	Connect and engage the community	1.3 - Focus on creative and responsive programming and continue to pr...	Q3	Lindsey Ellison	High	April Update: Yo...	No
Develop and publish an o...	Connect and engage the community	1.3 - Focus on creative and responsive programming and continue to pr...	Q1	Lindsey Ellison	Medium	February 2026 -...	Yes
Train staff to be KultureCi...	Create library spaces that welcome and inspire	2.1 - Evaluate library spaces to expand usage and improve accessibility a...	Q2	Mary Cowles	Medium	3/24/2026 - 24 ...	Yes
Work with the Disability ...	Create library spaces that welcome and inspire	2.1 - Evaluate library spaces to expand usage and improve accessibility a...	Q1	Kathleen Kwiatkowski	High	1/8/2026 - Disa...	Yes
Renovate the library's thr...	Create library spaces that welcome and inspire	2.1 - Evaluate library spaces to expand usage and improve accessibility a...	Q1	Kathleen Kwiatkowski	Medium	2025 - Got a qu...	No
Purchase and install patio ...	Create library spaces that welcome and inspire	2.1 - Evaluate library spaces to expand usage and improve accessibility a...	Q2	Kathleen Kwiatkowski	High	2/9/2026 - Libra...	Yes
Improve Activity Room fu...	Create library spaces that welcome and inspire	2.1 - Evaluate library spaces to expand usage and improve accessibility a...	Q2	Mary Cowles	Medium	January 2026 - ...	Yes
Adding more clocks/displ...	Create library spaces that welcome and inspire	2.1 - Evaluate library spaces to expand usage and improve accessibility a...	Q3	Mary Cowles	Low	Bulletin board f...	No
Reimagine the Tech Studio	Create library spaces that welcome and inspire	2.1 - Evaluate library spaces to expand usage and improve accessibility a...	Q1-Q4	Lindsey Ellison	High	June 2026: Bean...	No
Reconfigure the print/sca...	Create library spaces that welcome and inspire	2.1 - Evaluate library spaces to expand usage and improve accessibility a...	Q4	Lindsey Ellison	High	June 2026: We ...	No
Improve shelving and ligh...	Create library spaces that welcome and inspire	2.1 - Evaluate library spaces to expand usage and improve accessibility a...	Q4	Lindsey Ellison	Medium	June 2026: Kyle ...	No
Revise how the Youth Libr...	Create library spaces that welcome and inspire	2.1 - Evaluate library spaces to expand usage and improve accessibility a...	Q3	Mary Cowles	Medium	March 2026 - To...	No

TRACKING WITH LISTS



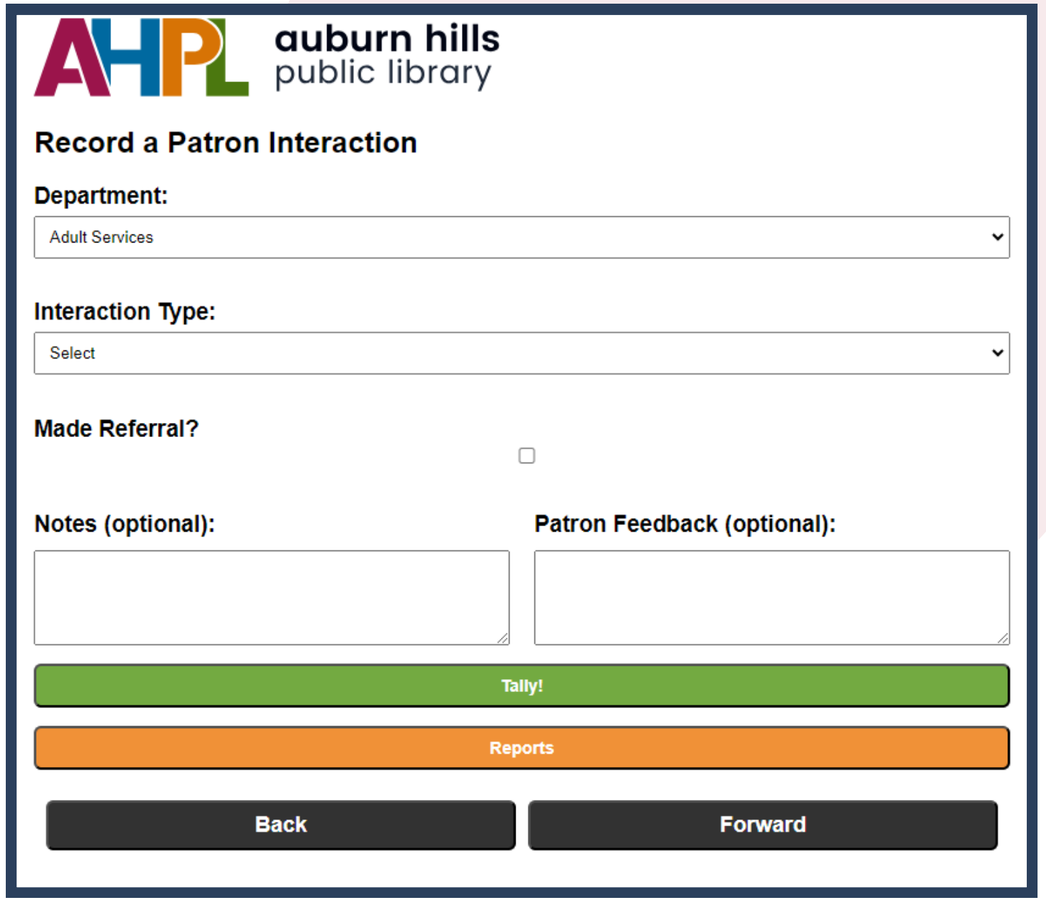
KEEPING EVERYONE INVOLVED

- Every department has a laminated poster of our one-page strategic plan
- Start all staff meetings with our purpose statement and strategic plan
- Board reports are structured in a way that follows our strategic plan
- Present quarterly to the Library Board on annual activities
- Annual report



EVALUATION

- Surveys
  - After programs
  - Unique survey after large events
  - Bite-sized surveys in our Patron Point emails (2-3 quick questions)
- Tally



QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU!



Amanda Standerfer

Founder and Lead Consultant
Fast Forward Libraries
amanda@standerferconsulting.com
fastforwardlibraries.com



Kathleen Kwiatkowski

Director
Auburn Hills Public Library
kwiatkowskik@ahplibrary.org

Examples and slides are available in the conference portal.