

Insights Summary Report

St. Catharines Public Library

St. Catharines Public Library (SCPL) and Overlap Associates have been working together for the past few months to get feedback from the people of St. Catharines to understand what better means for SCPL and inform SCPL's upcoming strategic plan.

This document reports the outcomes of the community engagement including the board of directors, management team, staff, patrons, and broader community.

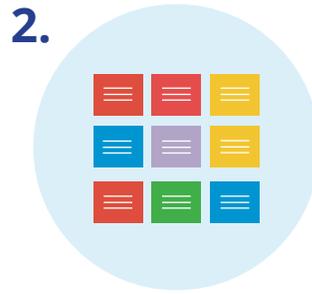
**Overlap
Associates**



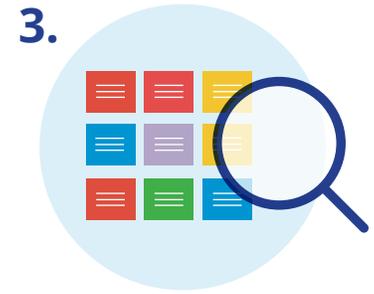
How we uncovered the insights



You shared your stories and feedback with us.



We broke the stories and feedback down into bite-sized information.



We identified trends between your information and the information of other people in your community.



We pieced data together based on what we heard from you and other people.



We're reporting back the trends of what people in your community told us.



St. Catharines Public Library will use the trends in this report to write their upcoming strategic plan.

Engagement Activities:

- Over 300 short-burst interviews with community members
- 2 Stakeholder Labs with 23 community members
- 1 Stakeholder Lab with staff and interviews with management and board members

"The Library is a place [where] you can always go to connect."

The six insights about the Library

The Library Is For Learning New Things and Sharing Knowledge

THE LIBRARY IS FOR LEARNING NEW THINGS AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE

We heard that the Library should be a safe space for learning and sharing for the people of St. Catharines. Many of you told us about the great books, historical records, and other collections already at the Library. We also heard that new and interesting collections could bring new people to the Library.

SPECIFICALLY WE HEARD:

- Explore non-traditional collections (Library of Things, Seed Library, etc.)
- Increase the current collection (e.g.: languages, graphic novels, etc.)
- Showcase the archive and historical collection

Continue To Be the Friendly Staff That The Community Knows and Build External Partnerships

CONTINUE TO BE THE FRIENDLY STAFF THAT THE COMMUNITY KNOWS AND BUILD EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

We heard about how welcoming and helpful SCPL staff are for the people of St. Catharines. You told us that staff often go above and beyond. We also heard SCPL could build more relationships with other community organizations to better support the people of St. Catharines.

SPECIFICALLY WE HEARD:

- Staff are helpful and welcoming
- Partner with other community organizations to make non-library patrons (newcomers, schools, LGBTQA+, etc.) aware of services
- Reach out to communities with limited access to SCPL

Ask for Feedback and Report Back On How It's Being Used

ASK FOR FEEDBACK AND REPORT BACK ON HOW IT'S BEING USED

We loudly heard about the need for SCPL to ask for feedback often and be out in the community more. You told us that you want to be included in the upcoming strategic plan and that you want to help the Library grow. You have ideas and want to share them with the Library.

SPECIFICALLY WE HEARD:

- Create an ongoing citizen suggestion program
- Market the changes that are going to be made in advance
- Continue to ask the people of St. Catharines for feedback

Grow with Purpose and Spend Wisely

GROW WITH PURPOSE AND SPEND WISELY

You told us that you want new branches, mini-locations, and other ways for the Library to reach the entire city. We heard about a need to renovate some branches as well. But you also told us that you know that changes cost money and that SCPL might need to increase its funding.

SPECIFICALLY WE HEARD:

- Offer more branches around the city—or at least book drop-off locations
- Renovate Central branch and use the atrium as a community market
- Use the Library to unify and connect all St. Catharines neighbourhoods

The Library is at the Centre of Social Issues in St. Catharines—and Must Choose How to Best Respond

THE LIBRARY IS AT THE CENTRE OF SOCIAL ISSUES IN ST. CATHARINES—AND MUST CHOOSE HOW TO BEST RESPOND

With few public and community spaces in downtown St. Catharines, SCPL's Central branch has become a place for citizens experiencing social challenges. Defining the Library's purpose is the first step to figuring out what actions to take to address important issues you shared, like feeling safe.

SPECIFICALLY WE HEARD:

- The Library is for everyone and everyone deserves to feel safe
- Make the 24-hour book drop-off feel safer
- Offer supports for people experiencing homelessness (clothes washer and dryers, social services supports, resume support, etc.)

It's Time to Refresh and Share the Library's Value

IT'S TIME TO REFRESH AND SHARE THE LIBRARY'S VALUE

You told us that SCPL has many strengths including a great foundation of collections, materials, and programs. However, you also told us the Library could do better in sharing its value to the broader community. We heard that you would like to find out about programs and services in new ways.

SPECIFICALLY WE HEARD:

- Rebrand SCPL and market the changes
- Use the section in the local paper better
- Host larger events that celebrate the great collections and materials

What happens next?

St. Catharines Public Library is working with Overlap Associates to refresh SCPL's Mission, Vision, and Values, and create a Strategic Plan. We'll report back to you in the fall once those are done.