



# KATONAH VILLAGE LIBRARY



STRATEGIC PLAN  
2025–2035

# Letter from the Director



Dear Community,

On behalf of the Katonah Village Library, I want to extend my gratitude to our patrons, staff, community partners, the Town of Bedford and our donors for your continued support. As a hub of community gatherings and connection, we have provided a welcoming space for people of all ages to come together, share ideas, and build relationships. It is with great excitement that I introduce our newly developed Strategic Plan, alongside a shared vision created in collaboration with the Bedford Free Library.

This strategic plan serves as a roadmap for the future, guiding our operations, shaping decision-making, and fostering sustainable growth. While Katonah Village Library has developed its own unique strategic plan tailored to the needs of our community, we have also worked closely with Bedford Free Library to establish a shared vision that strengthens our collective efforts and enhances services across the town libraries. Together, these plans will ensure that we continue to be essential resources for all.

At the heart of this plan are key strategic priorities that will shape the years ahead:

**Curating Discovery** – Offering free access to a diverse range of innovative resources, including books, electronic collections, streaming services, a 3D printing learning lab, historical archives, musical instruments, art exhibits, and engaging programs that inspire lifelong learning.

**Building Community** – Strengthening relationships through events, partnerships, and initiatives that celebrate our voices and perspectives. Recognizing the public's need for a place to connect and socialize, we are committed to fostering an inviting environment where meaningful interactions can thrive.

**Learning for Life** – Providing educational opportunities for all ages through professionally curated collections and programs that meet the needs of every age group, from birth to seniors, with a focus on expanding intergenerational programs that bring together individuals of all ages to learn, share experiences, and build connections.

**Collaborating with Purpose** – Partnering with local organizations, businesses, and institutions to amplify our collective impact and reach. Encouraging creative volunteerism, we seek to engage community members in meaningful ways that leverage their unique skills and passions to enhance library programs and services.

**Optimizing Resources** – Ensuring responsible stewardship of library resources, investing in technology, and enhancing our spaces for future needs. Our dedicated professional staff play a crucial role in providing expert guidance, Librarian-curated resources, personalized assistance, and programming that enriches the library experience.

**Enhancing Library Spaces** – Creating both interactive spaces for meetings and collaboration, as well as quiet areas for private study, reading and individual work.

We invite you—our community—to continue being an active part of the Katonah Village Library’s journey. Your input, participation, and advocacy are essential to the success of these initiatives. Whether through attending programs, sharing feedback, or volunteering, your support makes all the difference.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment, passion, and belief in the power of the library. We look forward to growing and evolving alongside you in the years to come.

With appreciation and excitement,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Kane". The signature is stylized with a large initial "M" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mary Kane, Director

# OUR PROCESS

Bedford is home to three robust libraries—Bedford Free Library, Katonah Village Library, and Bedford Hills Free Library—each serving as a vital resource for its community.

This strategic plan, guiding the Katonah Village Library (KVL) for the next ten years (2025–2035), is built upon our enduring commitment to serving the community. Developed collaboratively over six months, this plan reflects a partnership between the Bedford Free Library and the Katonah Village Library, emphasizing collaboration and community engagement.

The planning process was a collaborative endeavor, led by the Library Boards of Trustees, Directors, and staff from both libraries, as well as community members. It prioritized robust input from staff and the community through both qualitative and quantitative feedback.

Our approach was deeply rooted in attentive listening. We actively sought and incorporated well-rounded feedback at every stage to ensure the strategic plan comprehensively addresses community needs and interests. Community members expressed their appreciation for our exceptional staff, dynamic collections, welcoming spaces, and engaging programs. They also highlighted their desire for enhanced connectivity, both within the library and beyond, and emphasized their reliance on our services for support, information, and enrichment.

Moving forward, KVL is committed to a distinct plan driven by collaboration with other libraries, town-wide assets, and community stakeholders. We aim to deliver excellent, responsive, and inclusive library services that enrich the lives of all residents.

# WHO WE ENGAGED WITH AND WHAT WE LEARNED

We engaged residents and stakeholders through various activities, including participation in existing programs, one-on-one conversations, and open house sessions. These activities aimed to gather the residents' ideas, needs, and interests, which helped shape ideas for specific programs, services, and the future of Katonah Village Library.

**3** Library Board of Trustee Meetings

**4** Strategic Working Group Meetings

**2** Open House Sessions

**60+** Engagement Materials

**700+** Completed Community Surveys

**1000+** Minutes of Joy!



# OUR VISION

Katonah Village Library is a hub for our community, empowering residents to explore, connect, and grow.



# OUR MISSION

The Katonah Village Library fosters a vibrant gathering space for all to explore ideas, engage with culture, and discover new possibilities through access to information, dynamic staff support, and enriching experiences.

# COMMUNITY VALUES

Collaboration

Welcoming Environment

Kindness

Social Responsibility

Trustworthy Resource

# EXPERIENCE PRINCIPLES

The Experience Principles embody KVL's commitment to a thriving community. They articulate how our community values are evident in the ways in which we serve and support every individual who walks through our doors.

## **Collaboration**

We build community through collaboration, encouraging our community to participate, contribute and co-create library experiences.

## **Welcoming Environment**

We strive to make everyone who comes through our doors feel included and represented in our spaces.

## **Kindness**

We offer responsive and thoughtful service, with respect and appreciation for each person's individuality.

## **Social Responsibility**

We foster wellbeing and local knowledge to improve quality of life for all.

## **Trustworthy Resource**

We use our expertise to guide patrons in finding reliable, high-quality resources and information available to them within and beyond our library.

# AREAS OF FOCUS

The key priorities we're focusing on to better serve our community.

**CURATING  
DISCOVERY**

**Engaging Collections for  
an Interactive Library  
Experience**

**BUILDING  
COMMUNITY**

**Building Community through  
Co-Creation and Shared  
Spaces**

**LEARNING  
FOR LIFE**

**Your Library, Your Lifelong  
Learning Journey**

**COLLABORATING  
WITH PURPOSE**

**Stronger Together:  
Partnering for Greater Impact**

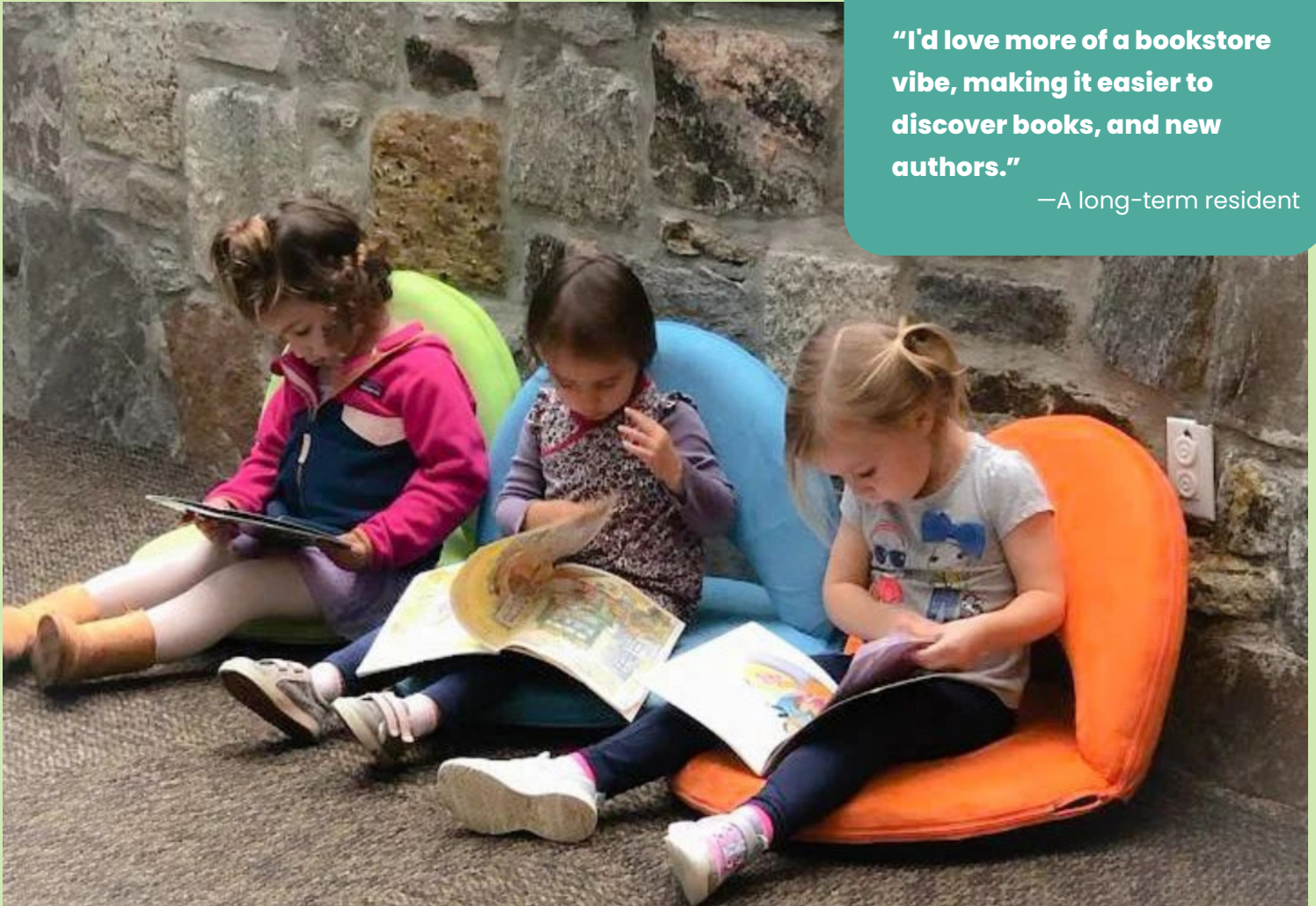
**OPTIMIZING  
RESOURCES**

**Essential Access and  
Services for Thriving  
Communities**

# CURATING DISCOVERY

## Engaging Collections for an Interactive Library Experience

The Katonah Village Library fosters discovery by curating collections and improving navigation by organizing materials by specific topics. Expanding library non-traditional items, the library creates multi-media displays of books, media, and specialty items to make exploration more engaging for all.



**“I’d love more of a bookstore  
vibe, making it easier to  
discover books, and new  
authors.”**

—A long-term resident

## Key Community Findings

Based on findings, the community identified curation and the provision of books and literature as the library’s top role.

The community is excited to explore new materials and collections that were not previously on their radar.

The community members are looking for a more user-friendly, bookstore-like browsing experience.

The community is seeking offerings beyond books, including tools, kits, and art supplies.

Patrons were observed reading, studying and enjoying quiet reflection in the library.

## **CURATING DISCOVERY**

### **Our Goals**

**Foster a browsing experience to enhance discoverability.**

**Enhance organization and navigation of the collection by highlighting different topics and interest-based themes and visual cues.**

**Design thematic displays that connect materials to real-world experiences and community interests.**

**Build a 'Library of Things'—a collection of non-traditional materials that patrons can borrow.**

### **We're exploring ways to:**

- Provide clear signage in multiple languages to help patrons navigate the space and collections with ease and comfort.
- Expand our Library of Things based on community interests and offer interactive demonstrations to support hands-on learning and discovery (e.g., gardening tools, wellness kits, emerging technology, craft and creative tools).
- Collaborate with teens to curate shelf displays that feature their recommendations for books, graphic novels, and artwork.
- Curate displays that celebrate the community's identity by highlighting current events and cultural diversity, such as Women's History Month and Black History Month.



# BUILDING COMMUNITY

## **Building Community Through Co-Creation and Shared Spaces**

We serve as a hub for connection, fostering an engaged community where residents can contribute, volunteer, and share their knowledge and skills. Our goal is to transform the library into a dynamic space for co-creating programs, and to create a welcoming environment where people gather, exchange ideas, and strengthen community ties.



**“We recently moved here and noticed how abundant the library’s offerings are and how it serves as the heart of the community. We want to contribute and share our knowledge with the community.”**

—Couple in their 70’s

## Key Community Findings

The community is looking for more events, including family movie nights, evening social gatherings and weekend programs.

Residents show a deep commitment to contributing their skills and knowledge to the library through volunteerism.

The community views the library as a gathering place where people from different parts of Bedford come together for programs.

Many families visit the library shortly after moving to Bedford, seeing it as a valuable resource to help them adapt and integrate into the community.

Teens are seeking more volunteer opportunities at the library.

Parents and caregivers request sensory play spaces, accessible meeting areas for parent groups, and extended evening and weekend hours.

## **BUILDING COMMUNITY**

### **Our Goals**

**Continue to foster community connections by hosting inclusive and diverse programs for all ages and abilities.**

**Strengthen volunteer engagement by creating structured roles and developing a Community-Wide Talent & Resource Database—to connect libraries through shared community talent, organizations, and volunteers.**

**Build community-driven programs, utilize volunteers, engage youth, prioritize personal connections, and foster continuous learning.**

**Develop a Community Welcome Kit and programs to help new residents navigate library services, programs, and local resources.**

### **We're exploring ways to:**

- Reimagine library spaces to encourage social interaction and intergenerational connections, integrating these ideas into the Master Facilities Plan.
- Deepen volunteering and community-sharing opportunities that foster connections through shared stories.
- Develop experiences that connect the community with nature, such as outdoor excursions, environmental workshops, and gardening initiatives.
- Collaborate with teens to make the library a go-to destination by supporting teen-led programs and teen-curated multimedia book displays.



# LEARNING FOR LIFE

## **Your Library, Your Lifelong Learning Journey**

We are a vibrant learning space for all ages, from early childhood to older adulthood. We support the community's growing interests through skill-building, recreational opportunities, and engaging programs. By offering resources in digital, media, financial, health, and civic literacy, we empower individuals and families to thrive and confidently navigate the world.



**“I come to the library twice a week. Sometimes I attend programs, play video games, or just hang out with my friends after school. It’s a place between school and home.”**

—A 9th-grade teen

## Key Community Findings

The community is passionate about history, art, and music, actively seeking creative learning opportunities such as history programs, art exhibitions, music performances.

During community engagement sessions, people frequently mentioned their interest in literature-focused events, such as local author talks and creative writing programs.

Residents are eager to improve their wellbeing through healthy aging groups, nutrition workshops, and accessible movement classes.

Students in grades 6 to 12 expressed a strong desire for more hands-on, creative learning opportunities, such as 3D printing, bookbased theater, role-playing games, cooking classes, STEAM programs, chess clubs, and Dungeons & Dragons.

## **Our Goals**

**Expand library experiences that spark curiosity, support personal growth, and inspire new interests for all ages.**

**Foster intergenerational connections through mentorship, storytelling, and collaborative projects.**

**Offer more project-based learning opportunities for teens to explore their passions.**

**Strengthen information literacy and promote responsible technology use through programs offered at the library. (e.g., scam awareness, cybersecurity).**

**Enhance access to digital and physical resources, including interlibrary loans and research tools.**

### **We're exploring ways to:**

- Introduce programs that foster intergenerational learning, creativity, and skill development for all ages.
- Expand year-round activities that promote healthy lifestyles, including meditation, nutrition talks, yoga, and Tai Chi.
- Increase access to private workspaces and pods to support professionals and students.
- Develop programs that help students prepare for middle school, high school, and college transitions.
- Foster intergenerational engagement by bringing patrons of all ages together to share skills, stories, and experiences.
- Help patrons recognize and navigate to credible online resources and strengthen digital literacy skills.



# COLLABORATING WITH PURPOSE

## **Stronger Together: Partnering for Greater Impact**

We are dedicated to expanding Katonah Village Library's impact by building meaningful partnerships and deepening collaboration with the Bedford libraries. Our goal is to create new opportunities for engagement, increase the availability and sustainability of offerings, and ensure that all residents have access to enriching resources for years to come.



## Key Community Findings

Community members appreciate being involved and co-leading programs with the library and want to expand this collaboration.

The community looks forward to more programs partnering with other town assets (e.g., collaboration with Seniors Helping Seniors, the Health & Safety Committee).

Community members suggested a shared calendar for Bedford libraries to track library programs and events.

The community wants the Bedford libraries to take a more collective approach to programming and events.

Participants seek more sustainable, consistent programs and believe partnerships would support this.

## **COLLABORATING WITH PURPOSE**

### **Our Goals**

**Develop a strategy for cooperative offerings, including shared databases, joint marketing, to enhance capacity, resources, and funding.**

**Co-host programs and events to increase participation and reach new audiences.**

**Build strategic partnerships and community engagement efforts to increase awareness and long-term support.**

**Align and promote library resources and event listings on all digital communications to connect patrons with programs, events, and community services.**

### **We're exploring ways to:**

- Provide space for organizations to share resources and host events, including opportunities for community-led gatherings after hours.
- Partner with local organizations to offer sample programs that connect patrons with available services.
- Deepen collaboration with schools to support students' learning needs beyond school hours.



# OPTIMIZING RESOURCES

## **Essential Access and Services for Thriving Communities**

Katonah Village Library is dedicated to responding to our evolving community needs by enhancing our spaces, supporting our staff, and building long-term financial sustainability to provide accessible and sustainable support to residents.



**“I hear about exciting programs the library offers but haven’t been able to attend due to work. It would be great to have evening and weekend events.”**

—An adult who works in the city

## Key Community Findings

The community expressed that limited library hours restrict access, especially in the evenings and on weekends, and many requested extended hours.

The community expressed the need for better physical accessibility, including an elevator and improved ADA-compliant design.

Parking is a major barrier preventing community members from visiting the library.

The community members are seeking more spaces for co-working, meetings, studying, and learning.

Teens have expressed a desire for a garden in the library.

The community expressed the need for library services beyond the building, including book delivery and additional book drop-off locations.

The community members also seek more ways to stay informed about library offerings.

## OPTIMIZING RESOURCES

### Our Goals

**Expand library services to be accessible and responsive to community needs by exploring extended hours, strengthening outreach, and supporting long-term program sustainability.**

**Enhance digital platforms and infrastructure to broaden access to information, resources, and essential services.**

**Improve physical spaces to enhance accessibility, flexibility and space use to support evolving community needs.**

**Invest in staff development to strengthen community engagement, collection management, youth mentorship, and technology support.**

### We're exploring ways to:

Pilot extended evening and weekend hours to accommodate more programs and social events that foster community gathering.

Assess and reconfigure spaces for accessibility, functionality and flexibility.

Create and enhance interactive spaces for meetings and collaboration, while also creating quiet areas for studying, reading, and individual work.

Install book lockers outside the library for convenient after-hours pickup.

Identify the skills and expertise needed to deliver new programs and services, and ensure that staff are trained, hired, or supported—either directly or through partnerships and volunteer models.



# ACTIVATING THE PLAN



# IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

This roadmap outlines a multi-year journey to guide Katonah Village Library through a thoughtful, collaborative process of strategic transformation. Rooted in shared values and a commitment to community, it provides a flexible yet focused framework for planning, piloting, and evolving together.

## PHASE 1

### PREPARING AND SETTING THE STAGE

**Lay a strong foundation by preparing internally and aligning around a shared understanding of the path ahead.**

#### ACTIVITIES

1. Convene and establish the right internal teams and advisory groups.
2. Communicate with library staff and board to build understanding and early support.
3. Assess current state: identify where you are now versus where you want to go.
4. Begin identifying opportunities for collaboration or resourcesharing across libraries.

## PHASE 2

### BUILDING MOMENTUM AND ADVOCACY

**Generate energy and buy-in through early successes and expanded communication.**

#### ACTIVITIES

1. Identify and implement quick wins that align with current capacity, community needs and priorities.
2. Broaden communication efforts to include the public, funders and community stakeholders.
3. Begin formalizing partnerships and cross-library collaboration that will support long-term efforts.

## PHASE 3

### PILOTING AND SCALING PROJECTS

**Activate the plan through pilot programs and initiatives, building capacity and testing what works.**

#### ACTIVITIES

1. Launch pilot programs, services, and initiatives aligned with strategic goals.
2. Track progress and learn from implementation in real-time.
3. Adjust approaches and scale efforts that show early promise.
4. Continue fostering and expanding partnerships to support pilots.

## PHASE 4

### EVALUATING AND EVOLVING THE PLAN

**Evaluate outcomes, sustain what works, and revisit the plan to set the stage for the next cycle.**

#### ACTIVITIES

1. Evaluate pilot programs and initiatives to determine impact and effectiveness.
2. Decide what to sustain, scale, sunset, or redesign.
3. Reassess goals and strategies based on what's been learned.
4. Adapt the plan to reflect new insights and set direction for the next 5 years.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We extend our sincere thanks to the dedicated staff, the Board of Trustees, and the engaged community members of Katonah Village Library and Bedford Free Library. Your active participation in the workshop sessions and the knowledge you shared about your neighborhoods, communities, and daily programs have been invaluable. Your thoughtful insights and generous contributions have greatly enriched this document, and we are deeply grateful for your time, effort, and commitment.

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## Katonah Village Library Staff Members

Appreciation to the library staff who contributed their insights during the strategic planning session.



