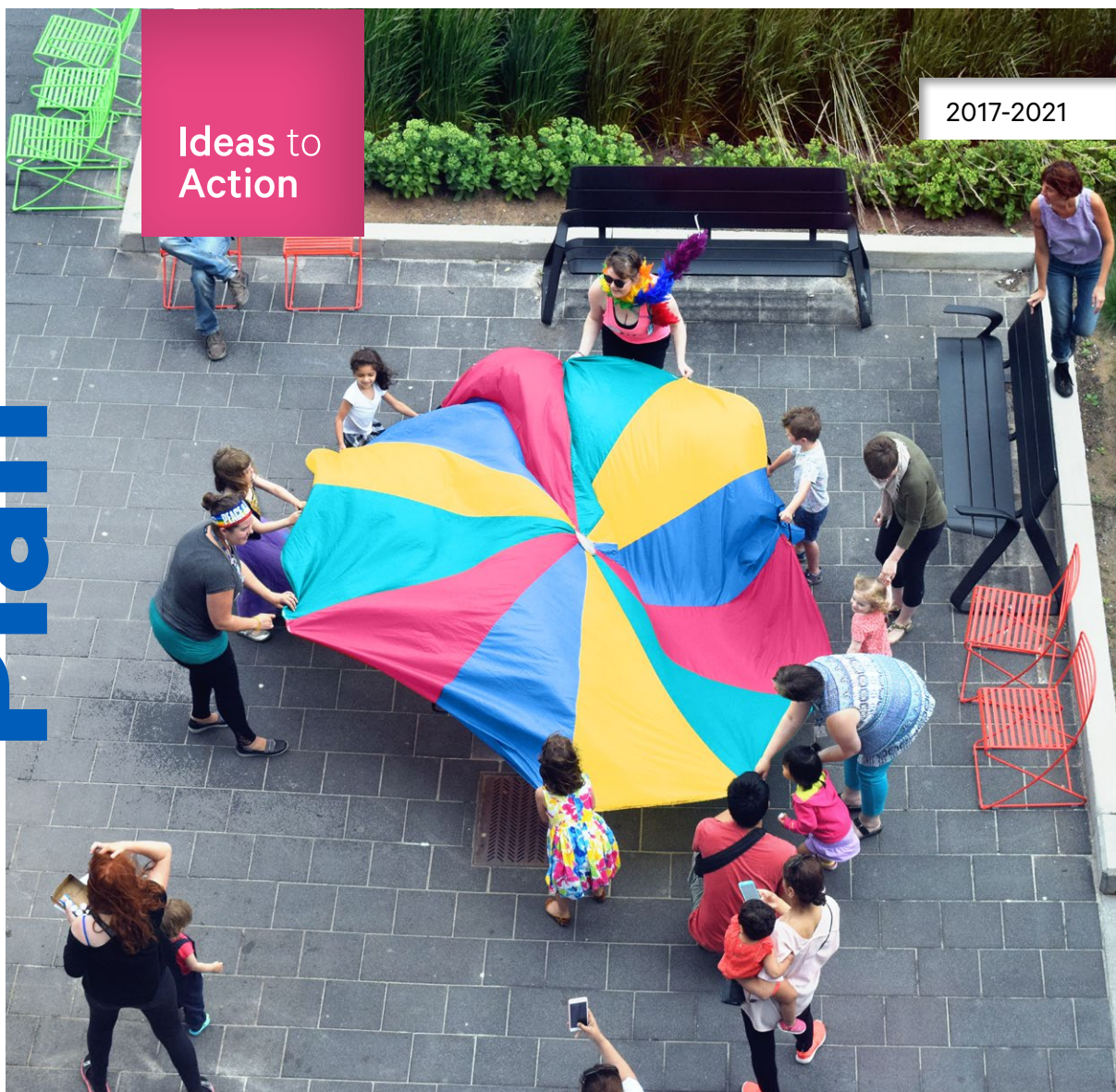


# Strategic Plan




Halifax Public  
Libraries



Ideas to  
Action

2017-2021





“People go to the  
library looking for  
information...”

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*Photo: Hana McLean*

*Quote: Robert Putnam, *Better Together: Restoring the American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003), 49.*



and they find one  
another there.”



# Foreword

**L**ibraries are uniquely positioned to engage communities and the people who live in them — encouraging participation, facilitating connections, and providing solutions in an ever-changing world. Halifax Public Libraries embraces this opportunity and the responsibility that comes with it with great pride. The best public libraries in the world are built on a foundation of equality and open access.

Our best ideas are your best ideas. The development of *Ideas to Action 2017-2021* began in Spring 2016 when we undertook our Let's Talk Libraries community and staff engagement campaign. We met you in your community, at your Library branches, and online. We asked you to share your perspectives on public libraries of the future. Your responses have informed our direction and they have allowed us to reach a richer understanding of your needs and aspirations and how we can help you achieve all that is possible.

We are excited about the new directions this plan represents and the creative ways it builds on our history of exceptional service and operations. This plan drives us to reach further, strive for excellence, and continuously grow. It supports the Library in having the greatest possible impact on the wellbeing and prosperity of our community.





# Vision & Direction 2021

## People Centric, Purpose Driven

People are at the heart of all we do at Halifax Public Libraries. Every individual in our community wants to thrive and contribute. Supporting this collective growth is why we exist. Today's public libraries represent **the possible**, and **our possible** is intertwined with the wellbeing and success of everyone.

### Reflecting Our Community

Just as the individual community member is at the centre of our vision, every member of our Library team brings life to our vision. Whether we are connecting a customer to a key piece of information or welcoming them to a free program — we know that individual growth becomes community growth. Growth means something different for every person we serve. It might be starting your own business, learning to speak English, or sharing a toy at playtime. Each interaction at our Library shapes the next, allowing us to become a living reflection of our community.

### A Resource for Everyone

*Ideas to Action 2017-2021* calls on Halifax Public Libraries to provide outstanding service, resources, and experiences. This plan is the foundation for every action we take and decision we make.

We are actively invested in the lives of our community members. Every time we meet you – in your local branch, at a community event, online, or by special delivery – we create a positive and uplifting experience. The measure of our Library's success is the degree to which you can rely on us as a resource to fuel your interests, knowledge, and the potential you hold.

### A Launch Point for Growth

Halifax Public Libraries exists to support collective growth in our community. We embrace this opportunity and the responsibility that comes with it with pride. As individuals create, innovate, and work with us, a lasting ripple effect is set into motion: a more literate society, social cohesion, informed decision making, improved employment prospects, and greater digital literacy.

We encounter brilliant moments and demanding challenges every day. **Our possible** looks different every day. And it is within reach every day.

**My Library. Your Library. Our Library.**

**Reflecting our community,  
we are a resource for  
everyone and a launch  
point for growth.**

# Our Framework

We work for the collective growth of our community, with people at the heart of all we do.

## Priorities: Our Possible

Our priorities reflect our community's needs. Your best ideas lead to our best work. Each priority is interconnected with the others.

- Expand organizational capacity
- Support sharing and creation of knowledge and enjoyment
- Create vibrant spaces
- Meet people where they are
- Encourage social and economic growth

These five priorities are the framework behind our Strategic Plan and, in turn, our day-to-day activities.

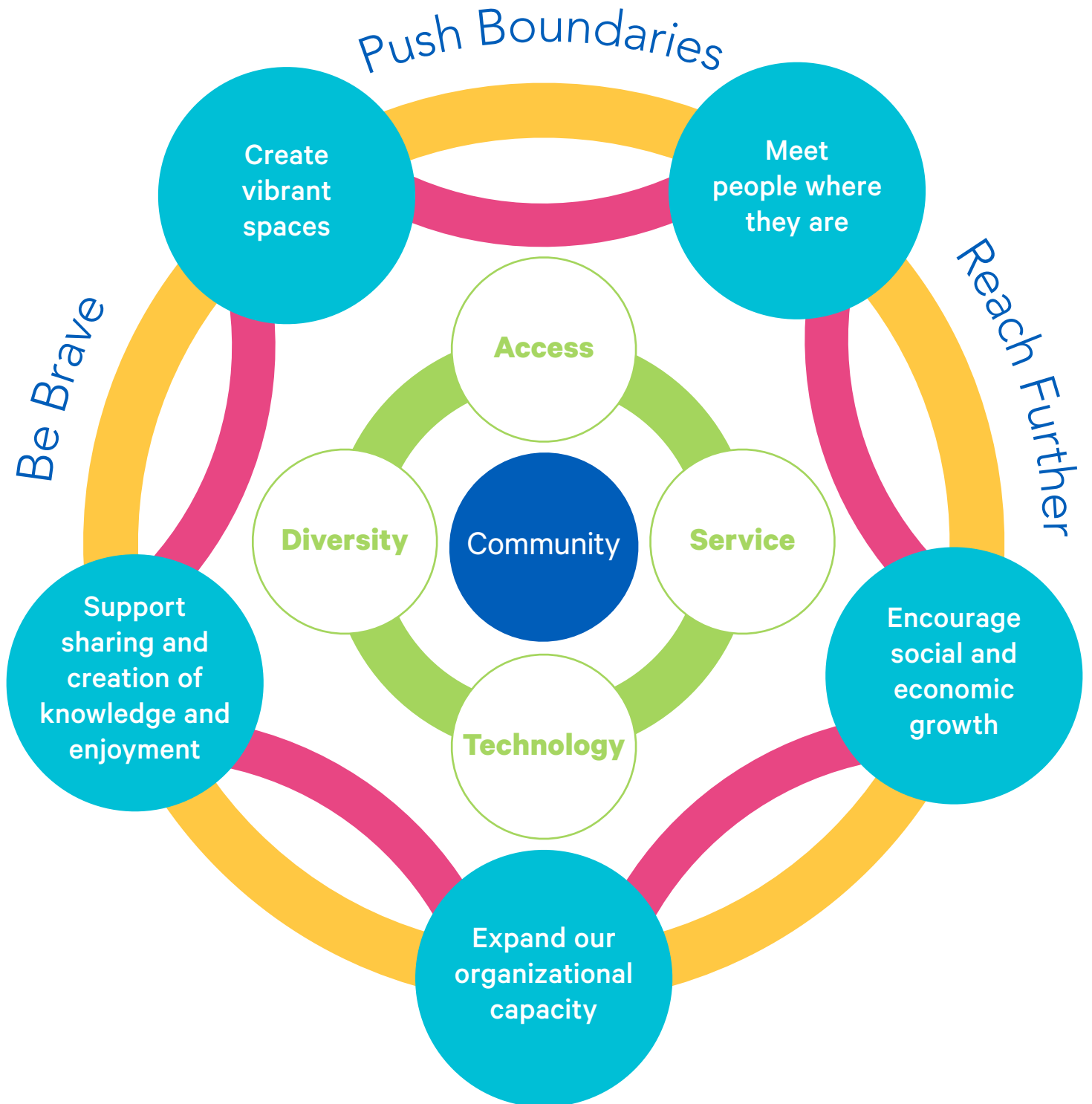
## Strategic Drivers: Our Values

We are driven by achieving excellence in technology, diversity, service, and access. These values form the foundation required for the best possible outcomes for our community.

- Leading edge technologies and **technology** training. A strong and trustworthy presence on web and digital platforms. Responding to our increasingly digital world. Digital literacy for all.
- A mosaic of cultures and voices representative of Halifax and beyond. Safe and welcoming environments. Celebrating **diversity** through programs, materials, and education.
- The Library's team sharing skills and knowledge to provide the best **service** possible.
- **Access** to high quality information, tools, stories, and enrichment opportunities for everyone.

## Ethos: Our Spirit

We will **Reach Further, Push Boundaries** and **Be Brave** to live our vision. We will go beyond what is expected, creating outstanding experiences for our community members at every touch point of our organization.



# Expand Our Organizational Capacity





## **People**

Libraries are continuously adapting to best serve and reflect our communities. We will develop a sustainable and financially viable staffing model by matching positions and capabilities, investing in staff development, and planning future staffing needs. You will benefit from a Library that is more efficient.

## **Systems**

Yesterday's library systems served us well, and today's libraries continue to build on this foundation by adopting new, innovative technology and business tools. We will enhance productivity and strengthen key service offerings by committing to continuous system improvements. You will have better service experiences.

## **Sustainability**

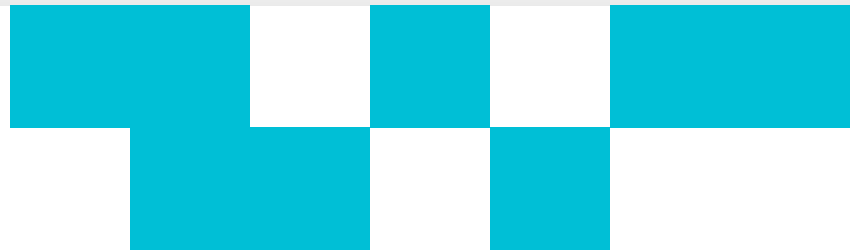
Libraries are able to respond to the ever-changing needs of our community when supported by committed investments. We will ensure long-term, sustainable support by working with our funders. You can continue to depend on our active and meaningful presence in your life.

## **Leadership**

Community representatives and experienced professionals govern and lead your Library with the public good at the forefront of their minds. We will further this people-focused mindset by supporting excellence in governance and decision making. You will have a Library Board and management team that are engaged, reflective, and responsive.

## **Spirit**

Halifax Public Libraries has achieved international recognition for our approach to public engagement in the development of Halifax Central Library. We will build on this model by creating a culture that values ongoing public consultation as decisions are made and priorities are set. You will be heard.



# Support Sharing and Creation of Knowledge and Enjoyment

## **Borrowing**

Libraries are in the business of offering items you want to borrow in the formats you want to use. We will renew and improve our commitment to building digital and physical collections by focusing on high-quality and relevant selections that reflect the interests and diversity of our community. You will have access to an inspiring array of items and information sources that allow you to fuel your interests and and discover new ones.

## **Experiences**

Libraries are ideal places for people to connect with others and share learning experiences. We commit to providing high-quality and relevant programs and learning opportunities that reflect the interests and diversity of our community. You will be entertained and enriched.

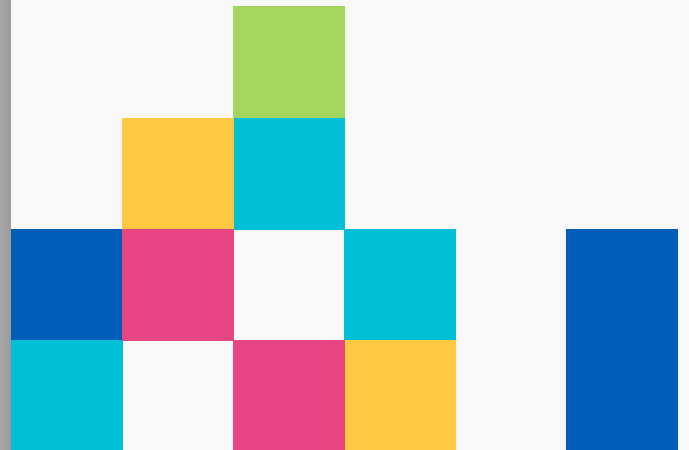
## **Access**

Libraries seek to create social equality, a concept realized through ensuring access for all individuals. We will extend our resources in a manner that increases ease of access to digital and physical formats. You will easily find what you need and discover new ways to explore.

## **Forums**

Libraries are neutral spaces that serve as a common ground for anyone and every topic. We will foster dialogue on issues important to the community. You will have an open space for participation and conversation.

**“A knowledge  
and imagination  
wonderland.”**





# Create Vibrant Spaces

## **Functionality**

Libraries and their communities are evolving. We will offer flexible and welcoming spaces that are responsive to your ever-changing needs and adaptable to our ever-evolving approach to service. You will delight in the convenience and comfort of your Library.

## **Atmosphere**

Libraries are built for people to enjoy. We will continue to create modern spaces that offer excellent technology, furnishings, and amenities to foster discovery, creativity, and social engagement. Your Library experience will be purposeful and surprising.

## **Locations**

Libraries are more than just their branches. We will extend our reach of library services by going beyond our walls. You will see us where you least expect us.

**“My family  
has made  
the Library a  
second home.”**







# Meet People Where They Are

## **Reach**

Libraries are dedicated to reaching as many people as possible. We are rooted in our branches, but not bound by them. We will reach out into our community to ensure library services are accessible to everyone. You will see the Library in new places.

## **Inclusion**

Libraries strive to be a reflection of their communities in content and people. We will mirror and deeply respect the diversity of our many communities. You will feel included.

## **Connection**

Libraries are places where people build connections to ideas and with others. We will provide all people with opportunities to develop stronger connections to their community, particularly when they encounter change, and adjust to new circumstances. You will feel connected.

## **Personalization**

Libraries are centred around people, and we encounter a wide spectrum of unique and specific needs. We will provide a model of outstanding, responsive service. You will see our commitment to you demonstrated in meaningful ways.



# Encourage Social and Economic Growth

## **Technology**

Libraries are hotspots for knowledge navigation. We are ready to embrace new technologies and bring you closer to the experience you seek through providing access to technology and instruction. You will be tech savvy.

## **Results**

Libraries make an incredible difference in the lives of people from all backgrounds. We contribute to the prosperity of our community. We will demonstrate and make visible the economic and social impact of our work. You will know the difference we make together.

## **Alliances**

Libraries work regularly with individuals and organizations to achieve meaningful results. We will actively seek out and build lasting partnerships for the purpose of increasing the impact of our work. You will receive excellent, integrated services.



**“My Library  
continues to  
surprise and  
inspire me.”**





# Priorities & Goals

## **Expand Our Organizational Capacity**

We will...

- Develop the Library's workforce to meet the current and future needs of the organization and the community.
- Enhance productivity and service through continuous system improvements.
- Ensure long term sustainable funding of the Library.
- Create a framework that supports excellence in governance and decision making.
- Create a culture that values public and staff input in decision making and priority setting.

## **Support Sharing and Creation of Knowledge and Enjoyment**

We will...

- Build high-quality and relevant collections that reflect the needs of the community.
- Provide high-quality and relevant programs and learning opportunities in response to community interests.
- Provide easy access to physical and digital resources that invite exploration.
- Foster dialogue on issues that are important to the community.

## **Create Vibrant Spaces**

We will...

- Offer flexible and welcoming spaces to meet community needs and adapt to evolving service approaches.
- Design innovative library spaces that offer excellent technology, furnishings, and amenities to foster discovery, creativity, and engagement.
- Support the delivery of library service outside of our branches by providing outreach infrastructure.

## **Meet People Where They Are**

We will...

- Broaden our community reach to ensure the greatest possible access to library services.
- Reflect and respect the diversity of our many communities.
- Provide people with opportunities to build stronger connections within their community, particularly as they adjust to new circumstances.
- Provide outstanding responsive service that takes into account individual circumstances.

## **Encourage Social and Economic Growth**

We will...

- Support digital equality through access to technology and instruction.
- Demonstrate and make visible the economic and social impact of the Library.
- Seek out and build strong partnerships that increase the impact of the Library.

Our Ethos

**Be Brave  
Push Boundaries  
Reach Further**



