BOARD LEGACY DOCUMENT

2022 - 2026



Bibliothèque de SDG Library

PURPOSE

This Board Legacy Document captures the activities, accomplishments, governance development, and reflections of the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry County Library (SDG Library) Board during its 2022–2026 term. It is intended to preserve institutional knowledge, support continuity between Board terms, and identify opportunities and considerations that may carry forward to the incoming Board.

A smooth transition between Boards is important to the effective governance of the Library. While returning Board members and Library administration provide continuity, this document records the experience and perspective of the outgoing Board and provides context for the decisions, priorities, and initiatives advanced during its term.

This document is intended to complement, rather than replace, the Library Board Orientation Package. The Orientation Package provides incoming trustees with the information required to understand their roles, responsibilities, and the operations of the SDG Library. The Legacy Document instead reflects on where the Library and its governance have been, what was accomplished during the term, what was learned, and what the outgoing Board believes warrants continued attention.



The SDG Library Board with author Nita Prose (SDG Reads event 2026).

LIBRARY BOARD 2022–2026

Margaret MacDonald (Public Trustee), Chair
Tony Fraser (Mayor of North Dundas), Vice-Chair
François Landry (Mayor of North Stormont)
Jason Broad (Mayor of South Dundas)
Jim Algire (Public Trustee)
Jo-Anne McCaslin (Public Trustee)
Lachlan McDonald (Mayor of South Glengarry)

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The SDG Library Board was guided throughout its term by the Library's 2022–2026 Strategic Plan and its vision of being a safe, welcoming, and trusted place in SDG for learners, seekers, and explorers.

Mission

To connect communities through innovative services, literacy resources, independent learning, creative expression, leisure, and civic engagement.

The 2022–2026 Strategic Plan established three broad strategic directions:

1. **Growing Our Physical and Digital Infrastructure**
2. **Conducting Community Outreach**
3. **Strengthening Our Organization**

These directions provided the framework for annual operational planning and guided the Board's oversight and decision-making throughout its term.

BY THE NUMBERS: 2022 – 2025

The 2022–2026 Board term was a period of growth, renewed community engagement, and continued evolution for the SDG Library. Library use expanded beyond traditional borrowing to include increased programming, digital collections, technology, outreach, and community-based services. The following statistics provide a snapshot of how Library use evolved during the Board's term.

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Circulation	296,425	343,461	329,984	383,123
Unique Borrowers	3,465	5,973	6,380	6,507
New Patrons	1,970	2,034	2,100	2,336
Branch Visits	72,225	97,212	108,031	105,266
Program Attendance	3,961	12,495	14,865	15,788

Growing Community Participation

Programming experienced significant growth over the Board term as the Library emerged from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and welcomed the return of in-person programs and activities. In 2022, as programming was being re-established, Library programs attracted 3,961 participants. By 2025, annual program attendance had grown to 15,788, reflecting both the return of community participation and the continued expansion of programming across the Library system.





As services normalized, the Library built on this renewed engagement by offering a diverse range of literacy and learning opportunities, creative and Maker programming, children's and family activities, author events, and community-based initiatives. Programming increasingly served as an important way for the Library to bring people together, encourage learning and creativity, and strengthen connections within the communities it serves.

BY THE NUMBERS: 2022 – 2025

Library Use and Membership

Library branches continued to serve as important community spaces. Annual visits increased from 72,225 in 2022 to 108,031 in 2024 and remained strong at 105,266 in 2025.

Library membership also continued to grow. The Library welcomed 2,336 new patrons in 2025, compared with 1,970 in 2022, while the number of unique borrowers increased from 3,465 to 6,507 over the same period.



Changing Ways of Using the Library

Borrowing remained a core Library service while increasingly reflecting the growth of digital collections. Total circulation reached 383,123 items in 2025, compared with 329,984 in 2024. Of the 2025 total, 171,731 circulations were digital books, compared with 115,277 in 2024.

The significant growth in digital borrowing demonstrates the changing ways residents access Library collections and reinforces the importance of maintaining strong physical collections while continuing to invest in digital content.

Digital resources also became an increasingly important part of Library service. In 2025, PressReader recorded more than 66,000 sessions, while newer services such as Comics Plus and Biblio+ added additional opportunities for residents to access digital content.

Together, these measures demonstrate a Library system whose role extends well beyond the circulation of materials. During the Board's term, residents increasingly engaged with the SDG Library as a place to learn, connect, create, access technology, participate in programs, and find information and resources.





BOARD LEGACY AND ACHIEVEMENTS 2022 – 2026

Over its term, the 2022–2026 SDG Library Board provided strategic oversight during a period of continued growth, modernization, and change. Working with Library administration, the Board supported initiatives that strengthened governance, expanded collections and services, reduced barriers to access, improved Library facilities, increased community engagement, and developed partnerships that extended the Library's reach throughout SDG.

The following highlights represent significant initiatives and accomplishments undertaken by the SDG Library during the Board's term, reflecting the strategic direction, oversight, and support provided by the Board.

Governance and Organizational Development

The Board placed considerable emphasis on strengthening governance practices, organizational planning, accountability, and the policy framework supporting Library operations.

Key accomplishments included:

- Completed the Library's next 2026-2030 Strategic Plan, establishing strategic direction for the incoming Board and the next planning cycle.
- Undertook a significant review and modernization of Library policies, including policies related to Board governance, financial oversight, accessibility, facilities, collections, technology, conduct, succession planning, and Board evaluation.
- Updated governance documents and practices, including the Board's Procedure By-law, to better reflect contemporary and increasingly digital governance practices.
- Completed annual Board self-evaluations and used the findings to identify opportunities to strengthen meeting preparedness, participation, discussion, and governance effectiveness.
- Continued annual review and approval of operational plans, budgets, communications and marketing plans, MakerLab plans, and technology priorities.
- Strengthened performance measurement through enhanced statistical reporting, including quarterly statistical summaries and additional analysis of branch usage.
- Undertook community and stakeholder engagement to support evidence-informed planning and decision-making.
- Strengthened Board succession and transition planning practices to preserve institutional knowledge and promote continuity between Board terms.



A complete list of policies reviewed and developed during the term is included in Appendix A.

Collections, Technology, and Service Innovation

During the Board's term, the Library continued to broaden its role beyond traditional collections while investing in physical materials, digital resources, technology, and innovative services responsive to changing community needs.

Key accomplishments included:

- Increased investment in Library collections, supporting the purchase of additional physical and digital materials.
- Expanded digital resources through the addition of services including NewsStand, Comics Plus, Biblio+ Streaming, Little Pim Kids Language Learning, Creativebug, and World Book.
- Expanded non-traditional collections through initiatives including phonics learning kits, nature backpacks, and a circulating board game collection.
- Established the MakerLab as a permanent Library service following its initial pilot period and continued to develop system-wide Maker programming and services.
- Implemented Mugo to modernize the reservation and management of book club kits and equipment.
- Introduced BiblioEmail to strengthen communications and marketing to Library users.
- Implemented Niche Academy as a staff learning platform to provide training resources and support professional development.
- Used circulation analysis, patron requests, branch feedback, and usage data to help identify collection needs and inform budget priorities.

Accessibility and Reducing Barriers

Improving equitable access to Library services became an increasingly visible priority during the Board's term. A number of service, membership, facility, and financial barriers were identified and addressed.

Key accomplishments included:

- Transitioned the SDG Library to a fine-free service model, eliminating overdue fines and removing a potential financial barrier to Library use.
- Broadened membership options through the introduction of a temporary digital access card, allowing greater flexibility in accessing digital Library services.
- Introduced a reduced-barrier access card to provide Library access to individuals who may be unable to meet traditional proof-of-address requirements.
- Installed a new accessible entrance door at the Lancaster Branch.
- Expanded payment options by making debit and credit card transactions available through Square terminals.
- Continued to consider accessibility and equity in the development and review of Library policies, programs, collections, facilities, and services.



These initiatives reflected the Board's commitment to ensuring that Library policies and service models did not unintentionally prevent members of the community from accessing Library resources.

Facilities and Capital Improvements

The Library's branch network remained both one of its greatest strengths and one of its most significant long-term considerations. Throughout the term, investments were made to improve functionality, accessibility, visibility, and the patron experience within branches.

Key accomplishments included:

- Completed a feasibility study examining the potential expansion of the Crysler Branch and initiated consideration of future space requirements.
- Completed painting improvements at the Williamsburg, Iroquois, and South Mountain branches.
- Installed new electrical drop poles at the South Mountain and Ingleside branches.
- Installed new carpeting at the Iroquois, South Mountain and Williamstown branches.
- Installed new shelving at several branch locations, including Williamstown, Williamsburg, Iroquois, and South Mountain.
- Installed new circulation desks at the Maxville and Avonmore branches.
- Improved branch visibility through door wraps and exterior signage at several locations, including Winchester, Alexandria, Long Sault, Iroquois, Williamsburg, and Crysler.
- Installed new street signage at the Alexandria Branch.





While considerable progress was made, the Board recognizes that aging infrastructure, accessibility limitations, space constraints, and changing service expectations will continue to require attention in future years.

Community Engagement, Programming and Outreach

Increasing awareness of the Library and bringing services beyond branch walls were significant areas of development during the Board's term.

Key accomplishments included:

- Created a temporary Communications and Marketing Coordinator position in 2023 and subsequently established a permanent Communications and Marketing Coordinator position in 2024, significantly increasing organizational capacity for communications, marketing, and community engagement.
- Designed and launched a new SDG Library website.
- Relaunched SDG Reads: One Book, One Community following its hiatus, featuring:
  - Maureen Jennings in 2023;
  - Craig Shreve in 2024;
  - Nita Prose in 2025; and
  - Shari Lapena in 2026
- Continued the TD Summer Reading Club and other system-wide literacy initiatives.
- Launched Pages for Presents in 2024 and expanded the initiative in 2025, connecting literacy with community giving.
- Launched the Morewood Express Depot in 2023, re-establishing a Library service presence in the community following the closure of the Morewood Branch in 2016.
- Implemented nighttime support hours in five branches to strengthen service delivery.
- Undertook community engagement surveys to better understand Library use, satisfaction, community priorities, and barriers to use.
- Expanded the Library's presence throughout SDG through participation in community events and pop-ups, increased school and seniors' outreach, system-wide programming, and targeted marketing initiatives.





Through these efforts, the Library increasingly sought to meet residents where they were rather than relying solely on traditional branch-based service.

Partnerships and Advocacy

The Board recognized that the Library's ability to serve the community is strengthened through relationships with municipalities, community organizations, educational institutions, health and social service providers, and other libraries.

Key accomplishments included:

- Strengthened relationships with local municipalities through regular communication, delegations, advocacy, and information sharing.
- Worked collaboratively with local municipalities to establish updated Library Lease Agreements across all six municipalities and clarify responsibilities related to Library facilities.
- Established a Board Newsletter to communicate Library developments and accomplishments to Board members, municipalities, and local Councils.
- Partnered with UCDSB-PIC to establish and host a Parent Resource Collection.
- Piloted a reciprocal borrowing agreement with North Grenville Public Library, expanding access to library materials for participating residents.
- Developed a partnership with Hôpital Glengarry Memorial Hospital to increase awareness of and access to Library services.
- Established a relationship with Naomi's Family Resource Centre to support outreach and reduced-barrier Library access.
- Developed and strengthened relationships with community organizations through outreach activities, programs, charitable initiatives, and community events.
- Continued engagement with provincial library organizations and sector partners to support trustee development, advocacy, shared learning, and awareness of emerging issues affecting Ontario public libraries.





The Board views partnerships as an important opportunity for future growth and encourages continued development of relationships that extend the Library's reach, reduce duplication, and connect residents with services and resources.

GOVERNANCE REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Over the course of its term, the SDG Library Board demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement, effective governance, and strategic leadership. Annual self-evaluations reflected a strong understanding of the Board's governance role, a constructive relationship with Library administration, and continued attention to the long-term sustainability of the organization.
Several themes emerged consistently through Board self-evaluations:

- Continued emphasis on strategic oversight rather than operational involvement;
- Strong engagement in policy review, strategic planning, and fiscal stewardship;
- Recognition of the importance of informed participation and meeting preparedness;
- Ongoing refinement of Board evaluation tools and governance practices;
- Commitment to respectful discussion, collaboration, and evidence-informed decision-making; and
- Support for trustee learning and governance development.

Over time, the Board's self-evaluations placed increasing emphasis on preparedness, informed participation, and the quality and effectiveness of Board discussions. This reflected an evolution in governance maturity and an ongoing effort to strengthen the Board's effectiveness.

Overall, the Board's experience reinforced the importance of maintaining a clear distinction between governance and operations, providing administration with appropriate strategic direction, asking informed questions, considering evidence when making decisions, and remaining focused on the long-term interests of the Library and the communities it serves.

Strengths to Build Upon

As the Board reflected on the organization at the conclusion of its term, several strengths were consistently identified.

1. **Staff and Organizational Capacity**: Library staff were viewed as one of the organization's greatest assets and the primary drivers of the value the Library delivers within its communities.
2. **The Branch Network**: the Library's network of branches provides a strong physical presence throughout SDG and supports local access, community connection, and inclusion.
3. **Breadth of Modern Library Services**: the Library has evolved beyond its traditional role as a provider of books. Its collections, digital services, technology, programs, Maker services, outreach, and community initiatives provide educational, recreational, cultural, and social value.
4. **Community Connection**: the Library continues to play an important role in literacy, lifelong learning, social connection, and access to information and resources throughout SDG.

Matters for the Incoming Board's Attention

The outgoing Board recognizes that a number of opportunities and challenges will carry forward into the next Board term. These observations are not intended to prescribe the priorities of the incoming Board, but rather to preserve the perspective gained during the 2022–2026 term and identify areas that may warrant continued attention.

1. **Financial Sustainability**: long-term financial sustainability emerged as a significant governance consideration during the Board's term. Rising operating costs, stagnant provincial funding, municipal fiscal pressures, and the continued reliance on accumulated surplus to offset operating requirements may constrain the Library's ability to respond to future needs. Continued attention to long-term financial planning, sustainable funding, responsible use of reserves, advocacy, and opportunities to diversify revenues will be important to maintaining the Library's financial resilience.

2. **Facilities and Accessibility**: the Library's extensive branch network is a significant strength, providing a physical presence and access to Library services throughout SDG. At the same time, many facilities present challenges related to aging infrastructure, limited footprints, accessibility, programming space, and the ability to accommodate modern Library services. Facility decisions have long-term service and financial implications, making continued assessment, prioritization, and collaboration with municipal partners important considerations for the future.

3. **Strategic Plan Implementation**: the outgoing Board completed the strategic planning process that will guide the Library through its next planning cycle. The incoming Board will assume responsibility for overseeing implementation of the new Strategic Plan, monitoring progress and outcomes, and ensuring that annual planning and resource allocation remain aligned with the Library's strategic direction. Regular review will also provide an opportunity to respond to changing circumstances and community needs over the course of the plan.

4. **Community Awareness, Partnerships and Demonstrating Value**: the Library provides considerably more than traditional lending services; however, public understanding of the full scope and impact of modern Library service does not always reflect this reality. Continued communication, advocacy, outreach, community engagement, and impact measurement will be important to demonstrating the Library's value to residents, municipalities, partners, and funders. Partnerships also represent an important opportunity to extend the Library's reach and strengthen its role within the community. Continued relationships with municipalities, schools, health care providers, social service agencies, cultural organizations, and community groups can increase awareness of Library services, connect residents with resources, and create opportunities to address community needs collaboratively.

5. **Organizational Capacity and Changing Community Needs**: the Library will continue to operate in an environment shaped by population and demographic change, evolving patterns of Library use, technological development, and changing expectations of public library service. Future planning will need to remain responsive to differences among the communities served by individual branches while balancing emerging services and technologies with continued demand for traditional collections and in-person service. Maintaining the Library's capacity to respond to these changes will also require continued attention to staff development, succession planning, leadership capacity, knowledge transfer, documentation, and appropriate investment in technology and digital literacy. Building organizational capacity will help ensure that the Library can adapt to changing needs while maintaining consistent and sustainable service across the system.

Governance Practices to Carry Forward

Drawing on its experience and annual self-evaluations, the outgoing Board identified several governance practices that contributed to its effectiveness and may provide a useful foundation for the incoming Board:

- Remain focused on governance, strategic direction, and long-term oversight rather than operational decision-making;
- Come to meetings informed and prepared to participate;
- Ask thoughtful questions and consider evidence when making decisions;
- Maintain respectful, constructive relationships among trustees and with Library administration;
- Remain attentive to the Library's long-term financial sustainability;
- Continue learning about the changing role of public libraries and the communities the SDG Library serves;
- Support meaningful engagement with residents, municipalities, and community partners;
- Advocate for the value and importance of public library service; and
- Regularly reflect on the Board's own effectiveness and identify opportunities for continued improvement.

Each Board will bring its own perspectives and priorities to the governance of the SDG Library. The experience of the 2022–2026 Board demonstrated that strong governance is built through informed participation, respectful dialogue, a willingness to learn, and a shared commitment to the long-term interests of the Library and its communities.

Looking Ahead

The conclusion of the 2022–2026 Board term represents both the completion of one governance cycle and the beginning of another. Over its term, the Board provided strategic oversight during a period of significant change and leaves an organization that has strengthened its governance framework, expanded and modernized its services, invested in physical and digital infrastructure, increased its community presence, developed new partnerships, and taken meaningful steps to reduce barriers to Library access.

The incoming Board will inherit important opportunities for continued development. The SDG Library will continue to operate in an environment shaped by changing community needs and expectations, financial pressures, aging facilities, technological change, and evolving patterns of Library use. The next Board will have an important role in overseeing implementation of the Library's next Strategic Plan, monitoring progress, and ensuring that the organization continues to respond effectively to the communities it serves.

The 2022–2026 Board is proud of the progress made during its term and grateful to Library staff, volunteers, municipal partners, community organizations, and residents whose contributions have supported the Library's success. The Board's experience reinforced that the strength of the SDG Library lies not only in its branches, collections, and services, but in its ability to adapt, build relationships, remove barriers, and remain responsive to its communities. The outgoing Board leaves the incoming Board with a strong foundation and renewed strategic direction from which to continue strengthening public library service throughout Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry.

Appendix A: Policies and Key Documents Developed and Reviewed

The following policies were reviewed and amended over the last five (5) years:

Policy Name	Updated
Disconnecting from Work	2022
Electronic Monitoring Policy	2022
Inclement Weather and Unscheduled Closure Policy	2023
Board Code of Conduct	2023
Delegation of Authority to the Director of Library Services	2023
Duties and Responsibilities of Individual Board Members	2023
Financial Control and Oversight	2023
Purchasing Policy	2023
Purpose of the Board	2023
Accessibility	2024
Communications	2024
Facilities	2024
Facilities Use	2024
Friends of the Library	2024
Volunteer	2024
Circulation	2025
Code of Conduct	2025
Donations, Sponsorships, and Fundraising	2025
Generative AI	2025
Unattended Child	2025
Board Self Evaluation Policy	2025
Board Succession Planning	2025
Collection Development	2026
Internet and Public Computer Use	2026
Political Elections	2026
Program	2026