



Altamont Free Library Strategic Long-Range Plan July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2029

Approved June 15, 2026

179 Main Street
P.O. Box 662
Altamont, New York 12009
altamontfreelibrary.org

[Mission Statement](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Methodology](#)

[Goals, Objectives, and Action Steps](#)

[Strategic Goal 1: Sustain a strong, engaged, and supported organization](#)

[Strategic Goal 2: Expand access to library services, programs, and spaces](#)

[Strategic Goal 3: Preserve and activate the library as a community and cultural anchor](#)

[Strategic Goal 4: Strengthen financial resilience and organizational stability](#)

[Evaluation](#)

[Supporting Materials](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

Mission Statement

The Altamont Free Library, housed in the historic Altamont Train Station, serves as a hub of our community: Enriching lives, creating connections, fostering literacy and inquiry, and welcoming all.

Introduction

The Altamont Free Library enters the 2026–2029 planning period as a valued and deeply rooted resource within the communities it serves. Community feedback consistently highlights the library’s role not only as a provider of materials and information, but as a welcoming, trusted place that fosters connection, learning, and community engagement.

This Long Range Plan (LRP) reflects both the library’s current strengths and the evolving needs of the community. Over the past several years, changes in how people access information, participate in programming, and use shared community spaces have evolved, alongside broader shifts in funding, and technology. In response, this plan is designed to be both forward-looking and adaptable, providing clear strategic direction while allowing flexibility to respond to changing conditions.

Since our last LRP, the Altamont Free Library has adopted a mission statement that more clearly reflects its role as a central and welcoming hub within the community:

“The Altamont Free Library, housed in the historic Altamont Train Station, serves as a hub of our community: Enriching lives, creating connections, fostering literacy and inquiry, and welcoming all.”

The strategic goals in this plan are directly aligned with this updated mission, translating these principles into priorities for the next three years. This Long Range Plan focuses on four key priorities that reflect a commitment to maintaining what the library does well, expanding access where there is growing need, and planning responsibly for the future.

This plan is intended to guide decision-making by the Board of Trustees and library leadership, support annual planning and budgeting, and communicate the library’s direction to the community.

This plan covers the period from July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2029. In 2028, the Board may conduct a review of progress and external conditions to determine whether to (a) continue the current three- year timeline or (b) extend the strategic goals to a five- year horizon.

Methodology

The development of this Long Range Plan was guided by a collaborative, community-centered process led by the Altamont Free Library Long Range Planning Committee and Library Director, Joseph Burke.

The planning process began with an initial Long Range Planning committee meeting held on April 14, 2025, to establish goals, approach, and timeline. Subsequent working sessions and ongoing coordination supported the development and refinement of the planning process.

To ensure the LRP reflects the needs and priorities of the communities it serves, input was gathered through a combination of surveys, facilitated conversations, and targeted outreach efforts.

A general online survey, open to all community members, was available from May through September 2025. It collected feedback on library usage, perceptions of services, and opportunities for improvement. The survey was widely promoted through multiple channels, including:

- The library's weekly column in the Altamont Enterprise
- The library website
- In-library promotion and circulation desk
- Paper flyers distributed in Altamont Elementary School backpack mailings in conjunction with the summer reading program
- Flyers with QR codes shared during the 2025 summer concert series
- Word-of-mouth

To expand participation and reach individuals who may not regularly engage with digital communication, additional outreach methods were used, including tailored surveys to gather input from families who are home-schooling and educators within the Guilderland Central School District. Additionally, paper surveys and drop boxes were placed in multiple locations across the Town of Knox and Town of Berne to broaden geographic representation.

In parallel to surveys, the library conducted a series of facilitated conversations and focus groups to gather more in-depth qualitative feedback. These included discussions with:

- Altamont Elementary fifth grade students
- Families and caretakers of young children
- Altamont-area senior residents
- Elected officials/leadership in the municipalities we serve

In total, over 200 library stakeholders participated across surveys, focus groups, and facilitated conversations, providing a broad and representative view of community needs, priorities, and aspirations.

Following the data collection phase, the Board of Trustees held a guided discussion on March 2, 2026 which was facilitated by Upper Hudson Library System representatives, Judith Wines, current Manager of Audit Services and Outreach, as well as current Executive Director, Chris Sagaas. This was designed to help synthesize the community feedback alongside other insights from the Board. The LRP Committee then worked iteratively to translate this reflection into a drafted set of strategic goals.

The adopted Goals, Objectives, and Action Steps outlined in this plan will guide the work of the Board of Trustees and Library leadership from July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2029. The Board will develop detailed action plans for each objective, allowing us to ensure progress towards the plans goals.

Goals, Objectives, and Action Steps

The following goals have been adopted as the priorities for Altamont Free Library:

Strategic Goal 1: Sustain a strong, engaged, and supported organization

Prioritize the retention and development of Altamont Free Library's knowledgeable, dedicated staff who define the library's welcoming character and service excellence.

1. Support staff retention through a positive work environment, appropriate resourcing, compensation, and professional development opportunities.
2. Ensure continuity of knowledge and operations during trustee, leadership or staff transitions.

Strategic Goal 2: Expand access to library services, programs, and spaces

Reduce barriers to access by making library services easier to discover, easier to attend, and easier to use for people of all ages, abilities, and schedules.

1. Expand or adapt hours of operation, including evening and weekend hours, to better serve community needs.
2. Explore opportunities to better align library access with the needs of specific community groups, including home-schooling families, group home residents, and teens.
3. Increase public awareness of library programs and services through clearer, more consistent, and accessible outreach.
4. Improve accessibility of facilities, programs, and digital resources for users of all abilities.

Strategic Goal 3: Preserve and activate the library as a community and cultural anchor

Sustain the library's role as a welcoming community hub by offering meaningful services, programs, and partnerships that reflect local needs and interests.

1. Maintain a warm, community-centered environment that reflects the library's values and identity.
2. Preserve access to a range of core programs and materials in a variety of formats for patrons of every age, ability and interest.
3. Increase collaboration with local schools and community groups to support learning, creativity and community engagement.
4. Maintain strong participation in resource-sharing systems, including UHLS interlibrary loan.

Strategic Goal 4: Strengthen financial resilience and organizational stability

Maintain a sustainable financial and organizational position that protects core services, staffing, and long-term viability in an evolving environment.

1. Support stable and diversified funding to sustain staffing, collections, and services.

2. Plan for the long-term stewardship of the library building including budgeting for capital projects that maintain the historic appearance of the train station, and maximize the usability of its interior and exterior spaces.
3. Develop contingency plans for operations and sustainable funding that consider future scenarios and changes to AFL's underlying organizational model.

Evaluation

The Board of Trustees will adopt and maintain a process governing the evaluation of the Long Range Plan.

Supporting Materials

A set of supporting documents related to the creation of this strategic long range plan are available, upon request, in paper format at the library's circulation desk.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following people who served on the Long-Range Planning Working Group: Library Director Joseph Burke, Library Trustees Christine Carpenter (chair), Debbie Evans, Mallory Fremgen, Raelee Grimm, Rachel Lane, and Nicole Robinson, as well as to all of the members of the 2023 through 2026 Altamont Free Library Board of Trustees.

We would like to extend heartfelt thanks to Tim Burke, Chris Sagaas and Judith Wines of the Upper Hudson Library System (UHLS), for their expertise, guidance, time and energy extended throughout this process.

We are also grateful to the groups and organizations that allowed us time or access in order to better capture the sentiments of our community, including the Altamont Seniors, Altamont Elementary School, Knox Town Hall, Berne Public Library and Hilltown Healthcare.

We would finally like to acknowledge the important contributions made by the members of our Altamont Free Library community who participated throughout the long-range planning process and shared their input, thoughtful suggestions and creative ideas. All of what you offered helped guide us in the creation of these goals and objectives. Your input, dedication and continued support of the library are what make us a rich and vibrant resource in this community. Thank you!