

STRATEGIC PLAN



Mechanicsville
Public Library
218 E. First St. | Mechanicsville, IA 52306

5-year plan
2022-2027

Approved by the Mechanicsville Public Library Board of Trustees
Wednesday, August 3, 2022

COMMUNITY

The town of Mechanicsville is located in Cedar County within Eastern Iowa. The current population of Mechanicsville is 1,020 as of 2020...a population decrease of 11.0% since 2010¹. The median age Mechanicsville residents is 41.3² years. The population comprises 44.15% male and 55.85% female². The vast majority of Mechanicsville residents are White, with a very small percentage of Hispanic, Latino, Asian, or African Americans. English is the predominate language.

The children in Mechanicsville attend school within the North Cedar School District. The elementary school is located in Mechanicsville, and the Jr./Sr. High School is located in Clarence, IA. Many students open enroll out of District to other nearby schools. Tipton, Lisbon, and Mt. Vernon are nearby towns students open enroll. Approximately 15.67% of Mechanicsville's population is school aged, and 3.15% of the population are preschoolers or younger.²

There are a couple of daycares in Mechanicsville, and a small percentage of citizens homeschool their children. Mechanicsville residents participate within local churches, community clubs, and various groups.

Mechanicsville is primarily a bedroom community with most residents commuting to work out of town. There is small number of local businesses and employers. Mechanicsville has a bank, a bar, seasonal farmer's market, a chiropractor, an art studio, a care center, a post office, a convenience store/gas station, a phone company, and a CPA. Mechanicsville has apartments, and various automobile, carpentry, woodworking, and farm services.

The median household income of Mechanicsville is \$65,491³ and is above state average of \$61,836⁴. Mechanicsville unemployment is below the state average 0.5%⁵ compared to 3.7%⁶ respectively, and the cost of living lower than the state average⁷ as well.

Citizens have access to information in a variety of formats including area newspapers, cable access channels, and an internet provider.

IOWA STATE DATA CENTER

¹ DECENNIAL CENSUS | 2020 Population for Iowa Cities by County

² CITY QUICK FACTS | 2015-2019 American Community Survey Median Age Total Population

³ AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY | 2016-2020 Median Household Income in The Past 12 Months in **52306**

⁴ AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY | 2016-2020 Median Household Income in The Past 12 Months in **Iowa**

⁵ AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY | 2015-2019 Unemployment rates (5yr period estimates) in **52306**

⁶ AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY | 2015-2019 Unemployment rates (5yr period estimates) in **Iowa**

⁷ AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY | 2015-2019 Median Monthly Housing Costs (Dollars)

(5yr period estimates) in **52306 & Iowa**

LIBRARY

The Mechanicsville Public Library building formally opened May 7, 1947. It has moved twice, first in April of 1956 and then to its current location in 1964. There have been two expansions to the current library. The first was in 1981 where the library expanded to the East, then again in 1998 the library expanded to the West. In 2012 an outdoor space was created with help from an Eagle Scout and several residents. In 2019 the library had many cosmetic updates to improve the space including new furniture, paint, and entry flooring. In March of 2020, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Mechanicsville Public Library decreased overall operations, however remained open during the pandemic. In the Fall of 2021, the Mechanicsville Public Library resumed normal functions. Currently in 2022, the Mechanicsville Public Library has been able to resume regular hours and all in-person programming and activities.

Three employees help to keep the doors of the library open 31 hours each week with morning, afternoon, evening, and Saturday hours. The library provides books, periodicals, games, visual and audio materials, puzzles, and more. Also provided are online job and homework help, downloadable audio books, eBooks, and a streaming video service. Our library's programs include programming for all ages with an emphasis on summer reading programs and S.T.E.A.M. Makerspace Cart and resources. The library also provides our community with copy/print/fax services as well as six public access computers and free Wi-Fi.

The library's staff is pleased to provide an updated, welcoming, and comfortable space for all ages to enjoy as well as creative programming such as a Makerspace. Mechanicsville Public Library offers events and programs based on the needs and schedule of community members. The library is accredited at Tier 3, the highest level possible, by Iowa Library Services. The staff appreciates the financial support provided by the city, county, and state governments and the support of the library's trustees.

STAFF

Meredith Dehmer
Director

Jane Pini
Assistant Director

Carrie Albaugh
Library Aide

TRUSTEES

Brianna Sauer
President

James Tutton
Vice President

Patti Doser
Secretary

Adam Eby
Trustee

Christine Weber
Trustee

Jay Hartman
Trustee

Christa Troughton
Trustee

THANK YOU

Mechanicsville Public Library Board of Trustees and Staff want to thank all the community members, users, and non-users, for taking the time to participate in our survey and communicating your thoughts and ideas for our town and library. The information gathered from your responses and conversations directly relate to our Strategic Plan presented in this document.

MISSION

Be More: A Place to Learn, Connect, Create, and Grow.

VISION

The vision of the Mechanicsville Public Library is to be the cornerstone of the community by providing a welcoming environment for people of all ages and cultures, with access to services that support learning, connecting, creating, and growing for its residents.

SELECTED SERVICE RESPONSES

SERVICE RESPONSE | CREATE YOUNG READERS

Early Literacy

Mechanicsville children from birth to age five will have programs and services designed to prepare them with the transition to school; with exposure to reading, writing, and listening.

This is an area that libraries strive to provide for our communities. Input from our community members indicate this is an area we should continue to work on to provide various approaches for services and resources to our families and caregivers to accommodate their needs.

FOCUS AREA 1: PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL AND CREATIVE PROGRAMMING TO SET A FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE SUCCESS.

- Provide weekly story time programs at the library (Spring 2023)
- Provide weekly story time programs at the school daycare (Spring 2023)
- Provide a monthly evening story time (Fall 2023)
- Develop and provide a “take-home” component for families unable to attend in-person story times (Winter 2023-24)

FOCUS AREA 2: PROVIDE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO SUCCEED IN LIFE

- Create a simple marketing approach for new early literacy programs (Fall 2022)
- Continue and expand on existing partnerships to provide:
 - Free books for families for early literacy available through Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) (Fall 2022 and ongoing)
 - Develop a love of nature through partnering with the Cedar County Naturalist for hands on age-appropriate programming (Fall 2022 and ongoing)
 - Parenting Resources available through the Families and Youth Educator from Cedar County | Iowa State University Extension and Outreach (Winter 2022-23 and ongoing)
- Re-boot 1000 Books Before Kindergarten (Fall 2023)
- Seek out new partnerships with outside organizations to provide additional resources not available through the library (Fall 2023)
- Ongoing educational opportunities for staff (Winter 2023 and ongoing)

FOCUS AREA 3: PROVIDE A PLACE FOR SOCIALIZATION AND COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS

- Seek to be involved with the downtown business community and other city organizations to provide joint opportunities for community connectedness (Fall 2022 and ongoing)
- Review the effectiveness of the current library facility, to accommodate the future needs of the community (Start Fall 2022 and ongoing)
- Review the overall staffing hours and positions to accommodate the future needs of the community (Start Fall 2022 and ongoing)
- Work with parent and teen volunteers to implement an annual literacy festival (Summer 2023)

SERVICE RESPONSE | Stimulate Imagination

Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure

Mechanicsville residents will have opportunities to stimulate imaginations through our collections, media, programming, and social interactions.

The community indicated they would like to see more community activities by the city. The Mechanicsville Public Library would like to be the major contributor in helping to provide more opportunities for community entertainment for all ages.

FOCUS AREA 1: PROVIDE ACCESS TO THE VISUAL ARTS

- Provide opportunities for all ages to create artwork (Fall 2022)
- Partner with High School Art Department and/or local artists to decorate the library windows for seasonal themes (Fall 2022)
- Market Kanopy’s “Thoughtful Entertainment” video streaming for all ages, and take advantage of the Public Performance Rights to host movies at the library (Winter 2022-23)
 - Seek permission, and set policy for adult programming (21+) to allow for consumption of limited alcoholic beverages (Spring 2023)
- Consider commissioning a muralist to design and paint the back exterior of the library to enhance the existing reading garden (Spring 2024)
- Start a “book-to-movie” reading and viewing club (Fall of 2024)

FOCUS AREA 2: PROVIDE ACCESS TO LISTENING ACTIVITIES

- Market Libby audiobooks for all age groups (Fall 2022)
- Invite local authors and historians to speak about their works (Fall 2022)
- Formulate partnerships with local entities for various demonstrations, speech, and drama practice (Fall 2023)
- Formulate partnerships with local musicians, and student musicians, looking for opportunities to perform/practice their music in front of an audience (Spring 2023)
- Look into starting a Podcast Club to discuss a various of podcast offerings (Spring 2025)

FOCUS AREA 3: PROVIDE ACCESS TO READING ACTIVITIES

- Continue working with the elementary school to provide twice monthly StoryWalks® (Fall 2022)
- Partner with the town’s Care Center to provide books and DVDs for reading and viewing pleasure. *Develop a procedure and policy for this service* (Winter 2022-23)
- Start an informal bi-monthly daytime book club for adults (Spring of 2023)
- Implement bookmarks, website page, and resource links to better provide Reader Advisory Services (Winter 2023-24)

- Start seasonal adult reading challenges to encourage reading within the community (Winter 2023-24)
- Consider a permanent StoryWalk® at the school or other designated area in the town (Summer 2024)
- Partner with the elementary school to encourage reading activities (Fall 2024)

FOCUS AREA 4: PROVIDE ACCESS TO COMMUNITY ENTERTAINMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR FAMILIES

- Partner with volunteers, various businesses, and city organizations to host annual seasonal events:
 - Chalk the Walk
 - Ice Cream Social
 - Library Fun Days
 - Movie in the Park
 - Many other activities to consider... (Winter 2023-24)

SERVICE RESPONSE | SATISFY CURIOSITY

Lifelong Learning

Mechanicsville residents will have the resources they need to explore and share topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

The community has indicated a strong desire for opportunities to express creativity, experience new things, continue life-long learning, and share goals.

FOCUS AREA 1: PROVIDE MATERIALS AND RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO EXPLORE INTERESTS AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING

- Build library collections for all ages around local interests (Spring 2023)
- Provide one-on-one or small class instruction for basic computer skills and online apps (Fall 2023)
- Have teens help aid with technology assistance (Fall 2023)

FOCUS AREA 2: PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO EXPRESS CREATIVITY AND TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- Provide classes led by community members (Spring 2024)
 - “Let me share with you...” introductory programs on topics such as how to: cook/bake, crochet/knit, draw, garden, finance/budgets, vehicle maintenance, etc.
- Start a B.Y.O.P. (Bring your Own Project) Hour for adults to promote community building and share their love of creating (Summer 2022)

FOCUS AREA 3: DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A “COMMUNITY” WEB PAGE TO HELP LONG-TIME AND NEW RESIDENTS BE AWARE OF ALL THE WONDERFUL SERVICES PROVIDED IN OUR COMMUNITY.

- Include links to other organization’s websites to help residents be aware of organizations and activities that may interest them, keeping them engaged within our community (Winter 2022-23)
- Encourage use of local businesses by sharing links to their websites and offering a brief description of their services (Winter 2025)

SERVICE RESPONSE | DISCOVER YOUR ROOTS

Genealogy and Local History

Mechanicsville residents and visitors will have the resources they need to connect the past with the present through their family histories and to understand the history and traditions of the community.

Through the 2021 City of Mechanicsville Survey, in preparation for their comprehensive plan, the residents expressed a strong desire to create a Mechanicsville History Center. At this time, the History Center has been successfully established as a non-profit organization. The Mechanicsville Public Library feels the History Center creates a natural partner in terms of overall collections and services provided to the community.

FOCUS AREA 1: THE COMMUNITY AND VISITORS WILL FIND GENEALOGICAL AND LOCAL HISTORY RESOURCES AT THE LIBRARY AND ONLINE.

- Market to the community that the library has access to Genealogy Courses through Great Courses (via DVD or Kanopy) to allow for independent learning (Winter 2022-23)
- Provide signage to easily find physical materials of family and local history resources in the library (Winter 2022-23)
- Dedicate a page on the library website with links to help with genealogical and local history research (Spring 2023)
- Collaborate with the Mechanicsville History Center to help provide our community with as many local history and genealogical resources as possible (Winter 2022-23)
- Research various genealogical databases (free and subscription based) for the library that can be linked to our library's website for use to our community/patrons (Summer 2023)
- Develop marketing materials to promote genealogical and local history programming and learning opportunities available through the library (Spring 2024)
- Survey users of these resources for additional materials they would like to have added to our collections (Fall 2023 and ongoing)
- Where possible, digitize current unique physical collections to be available online for research (Spring 2025)

FOCUS AREA 2: THE COMMUNITY WILL FIND TOOLS AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT THE LIBRARY TO RECORD AND DIGITIZE FAMILY AND LOCAL HISTORY FOR THEIR PERSONAL USE AND/OR FOR THE LIBRARY COLLECTION.

- Director and staff to learn the overhead and flatbed scanner equipment (Winter 2022-23)
- Provide small classes or scheduled one-on-one training with the public in use of technology available at the library to save family and local history (Spring 2023)
- Provide small classes or scheduled one-on-one training with the public for how to use Internet Archives website so individuals can add their own content (Spring 2023)

STRATEGIC PLAN

- Build our collections with resources to help community members learn how to preserve their family and local history (Fall 2023)
- Develop our “Library of Things” collection to include materials to assist with either audio or video interviews to record local and family history (Winter 2023-24)
- Look to partner with volunteers to help individuals digitize personal projects that can also be used for the library collection. (Summer 2024)
- Encourage community members to share digitized family and local history with the library so it can be accessible for future researchers (Fall 2024)

FOCUS AREA 3: THE COMMUNITY WILL FIND ONE-ON-ONE OR CLASS INSTRUCTION ON GENEALOGICAL AND LOCAL HISTORY RESEARCH AT THE LIBRARY.

- Provide one-on-one or small class instruction for how to use genealogical database(s) available through the library (Spring 2023)
- Partner with other organizations or experts to provide classes to share tips and education for those interested in collecting their family’s histories (Fall 2023)

SERVICE RESPONSE | VISIT A COMFORTABLE SPACE

Physical and Virtual Spaces

Mechanicsville residents will have safe and welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others or sit quietly and read and will have open and accessible virtual spaces that support networking.

Through input from the Library's and the City's Surveys, it is apparent the residents of Mechanicsville are looking to improve the look of their community and have activities and services available for all of its residents. The library is in a unique position to both help improve the aesthetic of Main Street, and to provide the much-desired activities for the residents.

FOCUS AREA 1: RESIDENTS WILL FIND A WELCOMING AND SAFE SPACE THAT SERVES AS AN ANCHOR FOR THE COMMUNITY.

- Review hours of operation to best fit the needs of the community and comply with the Iowa Standards (Fall 2022 and ongoing)
- Work with the City to make the needed facility repairs, and update the existing library building to extend the life of the facility (Fall 2022 and ongoing)
- Continue to improve interior spaces to best serve the needs of the community (Fall 2022 and ongoing)
- Upgrade outdoor furnishings to enhance Reading Garden space (Summer 2025)

FOCUS AREA 2: LIBRARY WILL PROVIDE A FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTABLE PHYSICAL SPACE THAT IS ACCESSIBLE TO ALL RESIDENTS AND ADEQUATELY SUPPORTS COLLECTIONS AND SERVICES.

- Rearrange space as needed to enhance library operations, socialization, playing, learning, quiet reading, computer/technology use, studying, working opportunities (Fall 2022 and ongoing)
- Work with the City to identify ways to expand or build a new facility (Winter 2022-23)
- Work with the City to create a library with a multi-function program/event space (Winter 2022-23)
- Continue weeding collections to provide space for up-to-date materials (ongoing)

FOCUS AREA 3: RESIDENTS WILL BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE LIBRARY'S VIRTUAL SPACES.

- Initiate a process where all programs are advertised consistently (Spring 2023)
- Provide consistent updates on social media, showing program outcomes (Summer 2023)

Here is what they are saying...

How does the library benefit you or the community?

"It makes everyone smarter and improves community pride."

"The library makes it (*the community*) look better and provides more things to do."

"A library is a source for truth, facts, and fiction. It's a jumping off place for learners of all ages. It helps us find similarities, differences, whatever, among us all.

I am forever grateful to my mother, who used to take us to a local library and made sure it was always a part of our lives. I did the same for our children...and with pleasure. And I watch as the pattern repeats itself with grandchildren, while navigating the changes in libraries!"

"You can get any resource you need through our library, and also trying to stay up to date."

"An unlimited amount of reading material."

"Provides me with a wide variety of materials and resources; saves me money; is a place to relax; provides things to do as a family."

"Fun programs, access to books (both fiction and nonfiction)"

"I wouldn't go to a library if the Mechanicsville Library wasn't available."

Here is what they are saying...

**What do you value most about our community?
(Share as much as you would like.)**

"Good people, dependable services (fire, ambulance, water, sewer, streets), churches, library, postoffice, bank, Casey's, and neighbors that help each other."

"That we have a school here to bring in new families."

"It's a safe place to live."

"Knowing my neighbors"

"Small and friendly"

"Services available to all. "

"Helping each other out when there's a need"

"I feel safe in our community (at home and in public places) and feel safe having my child in school here. "

Here is what they are saying...

What would you like to see our Community provide for its residents?

"More services for senior citizens; transportation - even bus trips thru the bank."

"More services and activities. A centralized area for information about what is happening. More teaming up between groups to think creatively about opportunities to engage the community."

"Services available to all for reasonable prices."

"Resturant"

"Some activities that get us better acquainted with each other. Our Trees Forever committee has helped with these in the past, using young people to help plant the trees, parades, or gatherings to celebrate the planting day. Garden Club members and Lions Club members are open to helping with events, as well. Let's celebrate what a good community we have!"

"An indoor recreation center would be nice, somewhere to take the kids to play and burn energy during the winter months when it's too cold to be outside or during the summer months when it's too hot outside."

A splash pad at the park would be nice too. Lisbon's splash pad is perfect, it has a shallow end for the younger kids to play and a deeper end for older kids and adults.

Something that simple draws people and gets people together to have fun."

"It would be great if the library could be open most every day, all day and evening. It provides a lot of programs, especially during the summer. It might be possible to work with DNR or another nature focused agency to create new programs for residents."

"Services for young people."

"more marketplaces"

Here is what they are saying...

How could the library's collections, services, and/or programs be improved?

"I think we have an excellent library!"

"Bring in more speakers."

"Hot spots, gaming system for youth, charging station, adult computer programs."

"I like the library the way it is."

"More upper elementary picture books, poetry."

"I think the staff does an excellent job of getting items requested. I think those that say the library doesn't have something haven't asked. The staff is totally interested in customer service. It's appreciated!"

Here is what they are saying...

What programs would you be interested in?

