FY2022-2025

Westborough Public Library Strategic Plan



Westborough Public Library
55 West Main Street
Westborough, MA 01581

Westborough Public Library Mission Statement

The Westborough Public Library is dedicated to the promotion of lifelong learning, personal and professional enrichment, and a love of reading. The Board of Trustees and the library staff strive to ensure free, equal, and confidential access to all collections and informational services, to maintain the library building, and to anticipate and prepare for future library service needs in the Westborough community.

Westborough Public Library Vision Statement

The Westborough Public Library is a comfortable and welcoming place where people of all ages and cultures come together, in person or online, to experience the joy of reading, express their creativity, satisfy their curiosity, and create and share content. The library is the hub of the community, and sustains itself through excellent customer service, careful stewardship of financial and physical resources, and attention to evolving needs of the community.

These two statements were formally approved by the Library Board of Trustees at their public meeting in September, 2013.

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Planning to Plan

In fall of 2019, the Westborough Public Library Board of Trustees voted to begin the Long Range Planning Process. Library Director Maureen Amyot sent out an RFP, evaluated submissions and, in October, 2019, the Board voted to accept a proposal from Deborah Hoadley of Hoadley Consulting. Director Amyot and Ms. Hoadley set up a project timeline and began to recruit members for a committee that would meet in February/March 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all plans for meetings and Strategic Plan work were suspended.

In September 2020, after the library reopened to the public, the Trustees restarted the process. Director Amyot and Ms. Hoadley set up meeting dates for the committee and an online focus group for early 2021, and rewrote the timeline with a completion date in late summer 2021.

The first meeting on March 22, 2021, examined the Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results (SOAR) that would make the library sustainable, current, and able to meet residents' needs while looking ahead to the future. The same SOAR exercise was repeated with staff on March 26.

A public forum was held virtually using Zoom on March 29, with 35 people in attendance. Participants were asked to respond to two specific questions: "What is one thing you wish you could do now in the community?" and "Use one word to describe how you envision Westborough 10 years from now." These prompts sparked meaningful discussion and provided valuable information for the direction and scope of the library's strategic plan.

The second meeting of the committee was held on April 7, and focused on creating a strategic framework and discussing ways the library could be integrated into the Town's new strategic plan.

A public survey based on responses and feedback from committee meetings and the public forum was conducted in May and June. Although participation was less than anticipated, a total of 88 responses were received and their comments and suggestions inform the entire plan. Director Amyot and Ms. Hoadley were able to formulate three Strategic Priorities, with goals, objectives and activities based on the information gleaned from the surveys, focus group, and the library staff. This Strategic Plan (FY2022-2025) was formally approved by the Library Board of Trustees at its monthly public meeting in August, 2021.

Description of the Westborough Community

The Town of Westborough is located in Worcester County in the east central area of Massachusetts. Boston is 29 miles to the east and Worcester is 13 miles to the west.

Once an agricultural community, Westborough has been transformed in the last fifty years by rapid residential, commercial and industrial growth stimulated in part by easy access to three major highways. The town went from a rural small town known for orchards and farms to an affluent suburban community with a reputation for excellent schools and a low crime rate. The town was incorporated as the 100th town in Massachusetts in 1717.

In 2021, Westborough was named the #1 place to live in Worcester County, #1 place with the best public schools in Worcester County, and #1 best place for young professionals in Worcester County by Niche.com. Famous residents include Eli Whitney, inventor of the cotton gin; Esther Forbes, author of Johnny Tremain; Andrew Clements and Kim Harrington, two contemporary author of middle-grade novels; Admiral Louis Denfeld, Chief of Naval Operations for the U.S. Navy; George "Butch" Byrd, star defensive back for the NFL's Buffalo Bills; Nikki Stone, gold medalist in aerial skiing at the 1998 Winter Olympics, and Kaz Grala, NASCAR professional stock car driver.

The population in 2019 was 19,144. The predominant ethnic group was White (69.9%) followed by Asian (25%) and Hispanic or Latino (6.2%). The population of residents born outside the United States was 26.7% in 2019, with 69% of foreign-born residents born in Asia. The largest segments of the population are adults aged 30-59 (8,537) and children ages 0-19 (5,148). This is presumably due to the excellent school system in the town. There's a small population of younger adults, aged 20-29 (1,679) and a robust 60+ population (3,673). The median age is 38.8.

The Westborough Public Schools are consistently ranked as a top district in the state. Niche.com rankings in 2021 place Westborough at #2 for Safest School Districts in the state, #9 for Best School Districts in Massachusetts, and #18 for Best Places to Teach in the state. They also rank Westborough in the top 10% of districts nationally for the same criteria, and in the top 10% for Districts with the Best Teachers in America. *U.S. News and World Report* placed Westborough High at #28 in Massachusetts and #718 nationally in their 2021 ratings.

During the 2020-2021 school year, there were 3,825 children attending school at 3 elementary schools (K-3), one intermediate school (4-6), one middle school (7-8) and one high school (9-12). Westborough students also attend Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School in Marlborough, and various private schools. There is a small home schooling population as well. Slightly more than half of the town's approximately \$111 million budget is spent on the schools, with a per-pupil expenditure of \$16,907 in 2019. Ninety percent of the class of 2020 went on to two-year or four-year college educations after enduring the end of their high school careers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Westborough values education highly and is a well-educated community. Of the adult population aged 25 and over, 66.7% have earned a bachelor's degree or higher; and 96.3% are high school graduates or higher.

The town is governed by open town meeting, with a five-member Select Board and a Town Manager. In March 2021 there were 13,248 registered voters. An annual Town Meeting is held in March, and a Special Town Meeting takes place in the fall, usually in October.

Needs Assessment

To create this plan, input was solicited formally from the Strategic Planning Committee, staff, trustees, and the public via surveys and virtual meetings using Zoom. The following focus areas were identified as priorities across all the groups:

Updating and upgrading the library's physical space: The Library Board of Trustees has been working on a plan to upgrade and update the library building since 2012. A Planning and Design grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners helped determine that the building was undersized for current and future needs. A Library Building Committee was formed, and they sought a Construction Grant from the MBLC. The initial round of awardees didn't include Westborough, which was placed at #11 on a waiting list for funds in July 2017. As of July 2021, Westborough is #1, expecting to receive a grant award in summer 2022. Ever cognizant of the financial impact of this project to taxpayers, the Westborough Public Library Foundation was formed in 2017 to offset some of the cost by raising capital funds for this endeavor and for the library's capital needs into the future.

Since the last building renovation in the early 1980s, use of the Westborough Public Library, and residents' expectations, have changed dramatically. The library must evolve to meet those needs. That message was loud and clear in the Community Survey that informed this Strategic Plan. Residents want more hours, more space for children and teens, better lighting, quiet study space, updated interiors, and improved restrooms. Additionally, residents who have transportation issues getting to the library have been asking for offsite "Mobile Library" type services, including apartment complexes and senior housing.

Increasing the amount of programming across age groups: Programming at the library (prepandemic) is generally well-attended. Children's and Teen program attendance has increased dramatically over the past few years, due in part to new staffing and new ideas. Residents, however, want even more events specifically for adults and children, and it is included in this plan. The long-time Adult Services Librarian retired during the pandemic, and because of a hiring freeze, a replacement wasn't brought in until early 2021. This situation is likely the cause of the desire for more adult events, since there were few held during the transition.

Collaborations: Residents appreciate the collaborative projects the library has done over the last few years with Westborough Public Schools, Westborough Connects, the Westborough Recreation Department, and Westborough Youth & Family Services, and would like to see these collaborations continue – and grow. Regular offsite visits to the Arrive Apartments and the Highlands are a huge benefit to residents who live there, and there are requests to expand services to other apartment communities addressed in this plan. Library Director Maureen Amyot is an active member of the Rotary Club of Westborough, and that membership has helped raise the visibility of the library in the community and beyond. An article about the Library/Rotary partnership for Repair Café events was highlighted in *Public Libraries* magazine a few years ago and led to other libraries around the country reaching out to the Westborough Public Library for information, and to their own local Rotary Clubs, to start similar efforts. It is collaborations and partnerships like these that will help the library continue to thrive and grow well into the future.

Strategic Priorities, Goals, Objectives and Activities

Strategic Priority #1 Facilities

Goal: Residents will have an updated library facility to meet their current and future needs.

Objective: The library will seek approval for a construction project once the MBLC grant is awarded.

Activity: The Library Building committee will be re-activated and be actively involved in all phases of the construction project.

Measure: Number of members appointed.

Measure: New OPM hired via RFQ process.

Measure: Amount of trust funds sought for design development.

Measure: New cost estimate sought and delivered by architect's team prior to Town

Meeting.

Measure: Number and frequency of committee meetings.

Measure: Number of members present at Town Meetings.

Measure: Number of meetings held with other departments/boards to understand all

issues related to construction, finance, logistics, safety, and permitting.

Activity: An awareness campaign, with the help of the staff, Trustees, Friends of the Westborough Public Library and the Westborough Public Library Foundation will be launched.

Measure: Number of materials created.

Measure: Marketing campaign created with assistance from staff.

Measure: Awareness campaign launched.

Measure: Number of community events/meetings attended by Trustees, Friends,

Foundation, and staff to share information.

Measure: Event(s)/meeting(s) held for abutters and neighbors to explain the project

and timeline.

Activity: Town Meeting approval will be sought, based on the updated design and cost estimate.

Measure: Design development and cost estimate completed.

Measure: Designs shared with the public.

Measure: Meetings held with Town Manager and Advisory Finance Committee to create

warrant articles.

Measure: Warrant articles completed and submitted to Select Board for approval.

Measure: Articles placed on Town Meeting warrant. **Measure:** Articles approved by Town Meeting voters

Measure: Ballot questions created and approved by voters, if required.

Activity: The Westborough Public Library Foundation will conduct a capital campaign to raise funds for the construction project.

Measure: Campaign started.

Measure: Number of fundraising events created.

Measure: Amount of funds raised toward the project.

Objective: Before renovation, the library will continue to provide meeting spaces for study groups, small meetings, or other nonprofit activities.

Activity: Shelving will be rearranged wherever possible to add small tables and chairs on the main floor and in the Children's Room.

Measure: Shelves rearranged.

Measure: New furniture purchased and installed.

Measure: Quiet "study nooks" created.

Measure: Number of comments received about the space.

Activity: The library will maintain a Meeting Room Policy that allows for equitable use of the large meeting space in order to accommodate as many groups as possible.

Measure: Policy reviewed/revised annually by Board of Trustees.

Objective: The library will continue to provide excellent services before and during construction.

Activity: A temporary location will allow the library to provide services while the building is under construction.

Measure: Staff and patron needs outlined for amount of space required.

Measure: Potential temporary locations sought.

Measure: Top suitable locations identified.

Measure: RFP issued for space.

Measure: Location selected.

Measure: RFP issued for packing/moving/storage services.

Measure: Library relocated to temporary space.

Activity: Programs, events, and services will be offered from the temporary space.

Measure: "Grand opening" event held at new space to create awareness.

Measure: Public meeting space is included in the temp site.

Measure: Friends of the Library are included in the temp site for book sales/storage.

Measure: Number of events planned for all ages.

Measure: Number of patrons visiting the temporary site.

Measure: New outreach sites identified and implemented.

Measure: Grants sought for offsite/mobile programming.

Measure: New strategic plan undertaken for planning services in the new facility.

Activity: Staff will create and maintain a safe, comfortable, and inviting environment in all of the public areas of the building, current and future (temporary site).

Measure: Patron satisfaction survey.

Measure: Door count statistics.

Measure: Staff members attend continuing education workshops and seminars on topics of interest/need in order to best serve the community.

Measure: Staff will assess safety issues and will call upon the Westborough Police and Fire Departments as needed.

Activity: The library will maintain a knowledgeable, positive, customer service-oriented staff who can help people find and evaluate information in all formats.

Measure: Number of current review journals and workshops staff members utilize to maintain and increase reader's/viewer's/listener's advisory skills.

Measure: Number of workshops and conferences attended by staff to learn about new information sources and methods for interacting with patrons of all ages.

Measure: Number of people who report positive interactions with staff.

Activity: The library will maintain membership in an automated network that meets the needs of Westborough residents and allows easy access to items held in other libraries both in the network and across the Commonwealth.

Measure: The library is a member of an automated network.

Measure: Patron satisfaction with online public access catalog (OPAC).

Measure: Staff survey to determine how well network services and policies meet the needs of Westborough residents and library staff.

Measure: Amount of system downtime, crashes, or other failures, to show whether software is reliable, stable, and easy to use for the public and the library staff.

Measure: Number of items provided to residents by other libraries in the network.

Activity: The library will seek grants or other funding to purchase and outfit a "Mobile Library" or bookmobile type vehicle.

Measure: Grant funding sought.

Measure: Discussions held with staff from other libraries with mobile/bookmobile services, and with town Financial Team about ongoing funding, staffing, materials, and other considerations.

Measure: Information shared with Library Trustees.

Measure: Grants sought.

Measure: Vehicle purchased, staff reallocated or hired.

Measure: Outreach program established.

Objective: The library will begin construction/renovation.

Activity: Using a Construction Management at Risk approach, construction will begin on the renovated/expanded library.

Measure: Construction Manager hired under MGL requirements.

Measure: CM is present at all Library Building Committee meetings once hired.

Measure: CM, architect, and OPM work as a team for success.

Measure: Frequent timeline updates are communicated to staff and public.

Measure: Construction begins.

Strategic Priority #2 Events/Programs

Goal: Residents of all ages will have opportunities to attend events and classes that are educational, recreational, and social in nature that are relevant to their interests.

Objective: The amount and frequency of programming for children and families will increase.

Activity: Staff will create and distribute a survey to determine residents' desires for timing, themes, and topics for programs/events for babies, toddlers, preschoolers, school-age children, tweens, and families.

Measure: Survey created.

Measure: Survey distributed.

Measure: Survey results analyzed.

Measure: Funding sought for new events/programs.

Measure: Number of new events/programs implemented.

Measure: Attendance at events/programs compiled and reported.

Objective: The amount and frequency of programming for adults will increase.

Activity: Staff will create and distribute a survey to determine residents' desires for timing, themes, and topics for programs/events for adults from younger ages through senior citizens.

Measure: Survey created.

Measure: Survey distributed.

Measure: Survey results analyzed.

Measure: Funding sought for new events/programs.

Measure: Number of new events/programs implemented.

Measure: Attendance at events/programs compiled and reported.

Objective: The amount and frequency of programming for teens will be maintained.

Activity: The Teen Librarian will consult with the WAVE teen advisory group to determine themes and topics for events to be held at the library and offsite.

Measure: Number of new events offered/older events sunsetted.

Measure: Funding sought for events/programs.

Measure: WAVE members consulted for ideas.

Measure: Attendance at events/programs compiled and reported.

Objective: The library's virtual presence will be enhanced and promoted.

Activity: Virtual offerings will be marketed and promoted.

Measure: A staff member is designated as Social Media & Marketing Coordinator.

Measure: A staff Marketing Team is formed.

Measure: Number of times the Marketing Team highlights one electronic resource for

promotion.

Measure: Usage of electronic resources increases across all products.

Measure: New electronic resources added after thorough review and creation of a marketing

plan.

Measure: Number of patrons/number of sessions for each electronic resource offered is

compiled and reported quarterly.

Objective: The amount and frequency of historical programming will be maintained.

Activity: The Westborough Center for History and Culture will continue to offer programs of interest to established and newer residents of Westborough.

Measure: Funding sought for programs.

Measure: Number of programs held.

Measure: Attendance at events/programs compiled and reported.

Strategic Priority #3 Collaborations and Civic/Community Engagement

Goal: The library will collaborate with other departments, organizations, and groups to sponsor, promote, and share library services and programs.

Objective: The number of residents with library cards will increase.

Activity: Staff will investigate opportunities for offsite library card signup events.

Measure: Number of groups/organizations contacted.

Measure: Number of library card signup events created.

Measure: Number of library cards issued.

Activity: Children's and Teen Librarians will coordinate with school librarians to run annual library card signup events.

Measure: School librarians contacted.

Measure: Number of library card signup events created.

Measure: Number of library cards issued.

Objective: The library will collaborate with other Town departments to offer programs/events for Town staff and the public.

Activity: Staff will seek opportunities for active and passive programs for the public with other town departments.

Measure: Number of departments contacted.

Measure: Number of programs created.

Measure: Attendance at programs.

Activity: Staff will organize and run a Summer Reading Challenge or monthly/bimonthly book club for other Town staff to promote teamwork and library services.

Measure: Reading event created.

Measure: Number of programs held.

Measure: Program attendance/participation.

Activity: Staff will continue to successfully collaborate with the Westborough Public Schools.

Measure: At least one in-person visit to each school, each year, to present a program for students.

Measure: Attendance at fall Open Houses for Mill Pond, Gibbons, and Westborough High School.

Measure: Materials about library services and events provided to all elementary schools for fall Open Houses.

Measure: Number of other collaborative projects.

Measure: Number of people participating.

Objective: The library will collaborate with organizations/businesses to offer programs or events for the public.

Activity: Staff will seek opportunities for active and passive programs for the public with Westborough-based organizations and businesses.

Measure: Number of potential partner organizations identified.

Measure: Number of collaborative programs held. **Measure:** Number of people attending programs.

Objective: Library staff will be encouraged to be involved in civic organizations.

Activity: Staff will seek opportunities for active involvement in civic/charitable organizations in town that align with the mission of the library.

Measure: Number of organizations identified.

Measure: Number of interested staff determined. **Measure:** Number of meetings/events attended.

Measure: Number of library-related presentations given.

Westborough Public Library Action Plan, FY 2022	YEAR
Maureen Amyot, Library Director	FY2022

Goal (from library's current Long-Range Plan)

Residents will have an updated library facility to meet their current and future needs.

Objectives (if included in current Long-Range Plan)	Actions	Timeframe for Activity	By Whom (optional)
The library will seek approval for a construction project once the MBLC grant is awarded.	The Library Building committee will be re-activated and set dates for regular monthly meetings.	Summer 2021 for reactivation	
	Members appointed or reappointed as needed.	September 2021	
	Committee to meet monthly, work on RFQ to hire new Owner's Project Manager.	Starting in September 2021	
	Trust funds sought for design development at fall Town Meeting.	October 2021	
	New OPM hired.	December 2021/January 2022	
	Construction Manager hired via RFQ process	January 2022	
	OPM, architect team, and CM work on design development and cost estimating in preparation for fall Town Meeting.	January-August 2022	
An awareness campaign, with the help of the staff, Trustees, Friends of the Westborough Public Library and the Westborough Public Library Foundation will be launched.	Campaign materials created.	Fall 2021	
	Awareness campaign launched.	Late Fall 2021	

	Public forums & neighbors' meetings to be held to explain the plan	Late spring 2022	
	Presentations offered to civic groups, parents' groups, and other organizations about the project.	Late spring 2022	
The Westborough Public Library Foundation will conduct a capital campaign to raise funds for the construction project.	Campaign kickoff and start of fundraising.	January 2022 and ongoing	
Shelving will be rearranged wherever possible to add small tables and chairs on the main floor and in the Children's Room.	Quiet study "nooks" created	Late spring 2022	
The library will maintain a Meeting Room Policy that allows for equitable use of the large meeting space in order to accommodate as many groups as possible.	Trustees will review/update the existing policy.	Spring 2022	
The library will maintain a knowledgeable, positive, customer service-oriented staff who can help people find and evaluate information in all formats.	Staff will attend continuing education workshops and classes.	Ongoing	
The library will seek a grant(s) to purchase and outfit a Mobile Library.	Grants sought, discussions held with Finance Team about ongoing costs.	Starting in summer 2021	
The library will maintain membership in an automated network that meets the needs of Westborough residents and allows easy access to items held in other libraries both in the network and across the Commonwealth.	The library is a member of an automated network.	Ongoing	

Goal (from library's current Long-Range Plan)

Goal: Residents of all ages will have opportunities to attend events and classes that are educational, recreational, and social in nature that are relevant to their interests.

Objectives (if included in current Long-Range Plan)	Actions	Timeframe for Activity	By Whom (optional)
The amount and frequency of programming for children and families will increase.	Staff will create and distribute a survey to determine residents' desires for timing, themes, and topics for programs/events for babies, toddlers, preschoolers, school-age children, tweens, and families.	Fall 2021	
	Survey results analyzed, funding sought, new programs implemented.	January – February 2022	
The amount and frequency of programming for adults will increase.	Staff will create and distribute a survey to determine residents' desires for timing, themes, and topics for programs/events for adults from younger ages through senior citizens.	Fall 2021	
	Survey results analyzed, funding sought, new programs implemented.	January-February 2022	
The amount and frequency of programming for teens will be maintained.	The Teen Librarian will consult with the WAVE teen advisory group to determine themes and topics for events to be held at the library and offsite.	Fall 2021	
	Funding sought, new programs implemented, some programs sunsetted.	Fall 2021	
The Westborough Center for History and Culture will continue to offer programs of interest to established and newer residents of Westborough.	Funding sought, programs held.	Ongoing	

Goal (from library's current Long-Range Plan)

The library will collaborate with other departments, organizations, and groups to sponsor, promote, and share library services and programs.

Objectives (if included in current Long-Range Plan)	Actions	Timeframe for Activity	By Whom (optional)
Staff will investigate opportunities for offsite library card signup events.	Opportunities sought, signup events held.	Ongoing.	
Children's and Teen Librarians will coordinate with school librarians to run annual library card signup events.	Meetings held, signup events planned and held.	Ongoing.	
Staff will seek opportunities for active and passive programs for the public with other town departments.	Meetings held, events planned and offered.	Ongoing.	
Staff will continue to successfully collaborate with the Westborough Public Schools.	At least one in-person visit to each school, each year, to present a program for students.	Ongoing.	
Staff will seek opportunities for active involvement in civic/charitable organizations in town that align with the mission of the library.	Organizations identified, staff participating.	Ongoing.	

Appendix A: Sources

CensusReporter.org profile of Westborough

https://censusreporter.org/profiles/06000US2502775015-westborough-town-worcester-county-ma/

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/general.aspx?topNavId=1&orgcode=03210000&orgtypecode=5&

Niche.com 2021 Rankings

https://www.niche.com/places-to-live/westborough-worcester-ma/rankings/

https://www.niche.com/k12/d/westborough-public-schools-ma/

United States Census

United States Census QuickFacts about Westborough

U.S. News and World Report

2021 High School Rankings

S.O.A.R. Exercise

Please use this chart to record your thoughts in each square. Try to stick to a word or short phrase. Please use the other side of the paper for additional comments. These will be collected, so please write legibly.

Strengths: What is working well? What do you like about the library?	Opportunities: What are some things you could suggest for the future?	Aspirations: What would you like to see happen in the future? What is your vision of the library?
Results: What are some of the impacts or changes you would expect if the aspirations were realized?	Community Impact/Results: How does the community benefit from this vision? How will this affect patrons?	Other considerations or thoughts:

The Westborough Public Library is conducting this survey as part of our 2021-2023 Strategic Plan. Your input will help us plan future services, classes and events. Thank you for your comments and suggestions. Please note, this survey is also available online at https://tinyurl.com/wplsurvey2021.

The deadline for completion is May 31, 2021, and surveys can be returned to the Library (55 West Main Street) during open hours or in the book drop next to the Parkman Street door.

1.	. When you visit the library, are you able to find what you're looking for?					
	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	I don't visit the library
	If you aren't	able to find wh	at you're looking for, p	lease give an exar	mple. If you don	't visit the library, why not?
2.	Do you have	any comments	about the library build	ling (our physical s	space)?	
3.	What one th	ing would you c	change or improve abo	ut the library?		

4.	Please list strengths of the Westborough Public Library.
5.	As we think ahead to the future, what are one or two goals the library should be working toward?
6.	Are there any other comments you would like to share concerning the library, its staff, the building, services,
	and/or programs?
Sui	rvey results will be posted on the library website, westboroughlibrary.org, in June 2021. If you would like a
	sponse to any of your answers to these questions, please provide your name and preferred contact information,
an	d indicate which questions you'd like answered. Thank you!