

Abington Public Library

600 Gliniewicz Way
Abington, Massachusetts 02351

Strategic Plan

July 2010 – June 2015



Submitted by the Board of Library Trustees
Henry DiCarlo, Chairman, and
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September 2009

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Approval of the Board of Library Trustees

This Strategic Plan, July 2010 – June 2015, was formally approved by the Board of Library Trustees at their September 14, 2009 meeting by unanimous vote.

Abington Public Library Mission Statement

The Abington Public Library serves the community as its primary information resource. The library provides recreational reading, listening and viewing materials, and programs, for all age groups from the youngest children to senior citizens. It provides access to resource sharing networks, the Internet and interlibrary loans, and has a vibrant on-line presence encouraging virtual use. The library building is a welcoming community gathering place.

Voted by the Board of Library Trustees, June 18, 2002. Revised September 14, 2009

Assessment of User Needs

The Town of Abington Master Plan Update, 2009 is the source of the facts and figures detailed below. The Board of Library Trustees and Acting Director Deborah Grimmeth thank Abington Town Planner Daniel M. Crane, The Abington Planning Board, Chairman Wayne P. Smith, Vice-Chairman Timothy P. Barry, Jeffrey Rangel, Bruce G. Hughes, and Robert Soper, and Planning Board Secretary Elizabeth Shea for providing an invaluable resource.

Background Information

The Town of Abington was founded in 1712 and was an agricultural community until the mid nineteenth century when it became an industrial center for the manufacture of shoes. With the decline of the shoe industry, the town's population stabilized until shortly after World War II. The town experienced two periods of rapid residential growth, the first from 1950 to 1970, and the second beginning in the late 1990's and continuing to the present. The most recent boom is a result of the restoration of the Old Colony Line commuter rail, which led to great growth in condominium and apartment development. The population has grown by 5.1 % since the most recent U.S. census, from 14,605 in 2000 to 15,344 as recorded in the 2008 town census. The Old Colony Planning Council projects a population of 16,638 in 2020.

Current Community Conditions

An analysis of land use shows that the land devoted to multi-family dwellings has increased from 88 acres in 1997 to 782 acres in 2008. The total number of housing units in town increased from 5,348 in 2000 to 5,887 in 2005. *The Town of Abington Master Plan Update, 2009* indicates that the rapidly increasing residential population is placing serious demands on town infrastructure, including the services provided by the Abington Public Library. Results from both the 2007 survey of library users and the 2009 focus groups conducted as part of the library's planning process agree with the *Master Plan Update, 2009*. *The Master Plan Update, 2009* states that children under 18 and the elderly represent the two fastest growing segments of the Abington population. This fact was addressed in the *Abington Public Library Long Range Plan, 2003 – 2005* and the needs of these population groups continue to grow. The 2000 U.S. census showed that the community was becoming more diversified both racially and culturally and it is expected that the 2010 U.S. census will detail a continuation of this trend.

Abington's many strengths include its location with commuter rail access to Boston, the sense of volunteerism and community spirit exhibited by many residents, the outdoor recreational opportunities afforded by Ames Nowell and Island Grove parks, the improved financial procedures for town government enacted since 2004, the strong public school system, the busy and welcoming public library and well maintained roads. The single greatest challenge facing the town in 2009 is continuing to provide services to residents in the face of the current economic downturn. The primarily residential tax base, combined with cuts in local aid has resulted in reductions in departmental budgets, including the library. Town buildings, with the exception of the library and police station, are aging. Poor communication among town organizations and agencies frequently results in lost opportunities for residents.

Community Needs

Both the 2007 survey and the 2009 Planning Committee identified community needs which the Abington Public Library is uniquely suited to address. Toddlers, preschoolers and the adults who care for them need learning materials such as books and media, and programs introducing these materials, to encourage early literacy and school readiness. Residents of all ages need print and audiovisual materials, on-line resources, and a variety of programs that address their social, recreational, creative and intellectual needs. Senior citizens require resources that address special needs with large print, and audiovisual materials and the delivery of these materials to their homes or the Council on Aging facility. All residents need a safe and welcoming facility in which to embrace intellectual pursuits, as well as strong virtual resources for pursuing information and imagination in cyberspace. Residents also need a reliable clearinghouse for community information.

User comments from the 2007 survey showed several areas in which residents require additional services. Wireless Internet access and computer instruction for adults were frequently requested items; wireless Internet service began in 2008 and individual "Book a Librarian" classes were offered beginning in the spring of 2009. The survey reflected a need to expand the DVD collection, and to vigorously assess and weed all print and non-print non-fiction collections. Most users wanted greater hours of service, with the addition of Wednesday evening the most requested. Many patrons requested a greater number and variety of children's and teen programs, and additional book discussion groups for adults and senior citizens. The 2009 focus groups brought forth these same user needs, adding the town's lack of a source of information about community events and activities, and the growing demands of citizens for whom the library is a destination which provides entertainment and intellectual enrichment .

Planning Methodology

The Trustees and Acting Director of the Abington Public Library are pleased to present the *Strategic Plan, July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2015*. This plan replaces the *Long Range Plan, 2003 – 2005*. The Board of Library Trustees began work on this plan in 2007 by surveying the community with the intent of submitting a new plan. Work was suspended in 2008 due to the impending retirement of the Library Director. Work on the strategic plan resumed in December 2008, when the Acting Director consulted Cheryl Bryan of the Southeastern Massachusetts Regional Library System for advice on the planning process.

The *Strategic Planning for Results* method, developed by Sandra Nelson for the Public Library Association, was adopted. A Community Committee was selected and productive focus group meetings were held resulting in the drafting of a community vision statement, the identification of community needs and the selection of service priorities for the library. The Board of Library Trustees voted to adopt the recommended service priorities on May 18, 2009. The *Strategic Plan, July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2015*, reflects the Community Committee's recommendations that the library should provide a comfortable physical and virtual space, where residents of all ages may satisfy their curiosity by engaging in lifelong learning and stimulate their imaginations by reading, viewing and listening for pleasure. Young readers should be encouraged and the library should provide community resources and services. The Board of Library Trustees is grateful to the dedicated members of the Community Committee, who generously donated their time and vision, and to the Abington Public Library staff for working to translate the Committee's vision into this *Strategic Plan*.

Community Committee Members

Amanda Adamczyk, Parent & Educator

Will Adamczyk, Library Trustee

Sandy Bumpus, Assistant Librarian

Mary Cordeiro, Tri Town South Shore Development Corporation

Henry DiCarlo, Library Trustee

Christopher Jones, Teen Representative

Kathy Jones, Friends of the Library Member

Lou Paragona, Vice-President, Abington Bank

Emily Miranda, Children's Librarian

Erin O'Neill, Teen Representative

Jake O'Neill, Library Trustee

Lorraine O'Neill, Former Library Trustee

Nancy Reid, Retired Library Staff Member and Town Summer Concert Organizer

Betty Slinger, Senior Citizen Advocate and Friends of the Library Member

Community Vision Statement

The Community Committee envisioned a vibrant and financially stable Abington with well kept town infrastructure, including an auditorium. The members of the community committee picture thriving businesses. The community will retain its unique small town identity, while offering services such as local public transportation to meet the needs of teens and senior citizens. The community will offer a greater selection of leisure activities, including concerts and cultural events, and will increase venues by building an auditorium. More programs will be offered at the town's outdoor recreational center, Island Grove, and amenities such as an indoor pool and basketball facilities will be added to encourage sports and a healthy lifestyle. The Committee pictured an independent bookstore and expanded Library services, particularly on weekends, to stimulate intellectual growth. Abington will have a strong virtual presence and a community events calendar to bring groups together and inform citizens of the opportunities afforded to them by their town.

Service Priority One

Create Young Readers: Early Literacy

Goal: Children age 5 and under and caregivers will find materials which enhance early literacy and which encourage reading as a positive and valuable activity.

Objectives

- Circulation of Toddler and Easy Reader books will increase by 3% each year.
- Circulation of parent materials will increase by 3% each year.
- Hire a part-time Children's Librarian to supplement the hours of the Children's Librarian.

Action Plan for FY11

- Develop subject based bibliographies of preschool titles.
- Develop new signage for preschool and parent materials.
- Research and evaluate new methods of marketing preschool materials.
- The Library Trustees will work toward obtaining funding for a part-time Children's Librarian.

Goal: Children age 5 and under and caregivers will have programs designed to ensure that young readers enter school prepared to learn to read, write, and listen.

Objectives

- Participation in programs for children age 5 and under that incorporate early childhood educational principles will increase by 3%.
- Offer educational programs for parents on how to help their children learn.
- Participation in offsite library programs for children age 5 and under will increase by 3%.
- Participation by children age 5 and under in the annual Summer Reading Program will increase by 3%.

Action Plan for FY11

- Survey and evaluate primary caregivers to determine areas of interest for educational programs.
- Research and develop ideas for 2 new programs for children age 5 and under at offsite locations.
- Increase marketing of library materials and programs for children age 5 and under.
- Promote and evaluate Summer Reading Program participation of children age 5 and under
- Research and develop ideas for new programs for children age 5 and under at the library.

Service Priority Two

Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing and Listening for Pleasure

Goal: Adults and Senior Citizens will find materials which enhance leisure time activities and which encourage intellectual pursuits and imagination.

Objectives

- Circulation of adult fiction will increase by 3% each year.
- Circulation of adult audio materials will increase by 3% each year.
- Circulation of adult visual materials will increase by 3% each year.
- Participation in the fiction book discussion group and at other programs featuring recreational materials will increase by 5% each year.

Action Plan for FY11

- Develop monthly bibliographies highlighting different areas of the collection.
- Expand the DVD collection.
- Continue the daytime fiction book discussion group.
- Explore and begin plans for an evening fiction book discussion group for FY12.
- Continue weekly outreach services at the Abington Council on Aging Facility.
- Offer two programs at the Council on Aging Facility.
- Offer 4 programs for adults/seniors which encourage reading/viewing/listening for pleasure.

Goal: Children and teens will find materials which enhance leisure time activities and which encourage intellectual pursuits and imagination.

Objectives

- Circulation of children's and teen fiction and picture books will increase by 3% each year.
- Circulation of children's and teen audio materials will increase by 3% each year.
- Circulation of children's and teen visual materials will increase by 3% each year.
- Participation in the summer reading program, book discussion groups and at other programs featuring recreational materials will increase by 5% each year.

Action Plan for FY11

- Develop monthly bibliographies highlighting different areas of the collection.
- Continue the four disparate book discussion groups for children and teens.
- Continue the summer reading program for children and teens.
- Offer 6 additional programs for children which encourage reading/viewing/listening for pleasure.
- Offer 4 additional programs for teens which encourage reading/viewing/listening for pleasure.

Service Priority Three

Visit a comfortable place: Physical and virtual spaces

Goal: Residents of all ages will enjoy a welcoming physical space, conducive to using library materials or meeting with others

Objectives

- Copeland Meeting Room use will increase by 5 % each year.
- Copeland Room exhibits will be recruited and promoted to the community.
- Teen use of the Nero Young Adult Room will increase by 5% each year.

Action Plan for FY11

- Explore technology to create an on-line Meeting Room Use application.
- Recruit Copeland Room exhibits for nine of the twelve months.
- Develop a marketing plan for displays and exhibits.
- Plan and host “Coffee in the Copeland Room” Saturday afternoon programs for adults.
- Meet with Middle and High School Librarians to plan promotion of Nero YA Room.

Goal: Residents of all ages will find an accessible virtual space which supports their needs.

Objectives

- “Hits” on the library website will increase by 5 % each year.
- Content on the library website will increase by 5 % each year.
- User bookings of museum passes will increase by 10% each year.

Action Plan for FY11

- All library policies will be added to the website by year end.
- Possible databases and content for teens will be evaluated.
- The Tixkeeper Museum Pass reservation system will be promoted on the website and in the library.
- The conversion of the meeting room request form from “print and fax” to an interactive document will be explored and priced.

Service Priority Four
Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning

Goal: Adult and Senior residents will have access to information to meet their need to explore topics of personal interest and to facilitate lifelong learning.

Objectives

- Circulation of adult non-fiction material will increase by 3% each year.
- Attendance at library-sponsored informational programs for adults will increase by 5 % each year.

Action Plan for FY11

- Develop a comprehensive weeding plan for the adult non-fiction collection.
- Assess and amend stack and display signage in the adult non-fiction and reference collections.
- Continue the “Book a Librarian” program to meet informational needs of adults/seniors.
- Present three informational programs for adults/seniors.
- Add a Non-Fiction Book Discussion Group for adults and seniors.

Goal: Teens and children will have access to resources which fulfill their need to investigate topics of personal interest.

Objectives

- Circulation of children’s and young adult non-fiction material will increase by 3% each year.
- Attendance at library sponsored informational programs for children and teens will increase by 5% each year.

Action Plan for FY11

- Develop a comprehensive weeding plan for young adult and children’s non-fiction collections.
- Assess and amend stack and display signage in the young adult and children’s non-fiction and reference collections.
- Create a teen advisory board.
- Present two informational programs for teens
- Present two informational programs for children.

Service Priority Five

Know Your Community: Community resources and services

Goal: All residents will have access to current and accurate information about the programs, services and events offered by community agencies and organizations.

Objectives

- Use of library bulletin boards by community agencies and organizations will increase by 10%.
- Online community events information postings will increase by 15% yearly, beginning in FY12.

Action Plan for FY11

- Contact community agencies and organizations to offer bulletin board services.
- Conduct a meeting for community groups to discuss common informational goals.
- Obtain information, including pricing, for establishing an online community calendar.
- Provide a “Community Group of the Month” link on the library website, highlighting services from community groups with an established online presence.