

Abington Public Library

Strategic Plan

July 2017 – June 2022



Board of Library Trustees: Henry DiCarlo, Chairman
Library Director: Deborah Grimmett
September 2016

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Approval of the Board of Library Trustees

The Strategic Plan, July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2022 was formally approved by the Board of Library Trustees at their September 12, 2016 meeting by a unanimous vote.

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, electronic books and media, interlibrary loans, and has a vibrant on-line presence encouraging virtual use. The library building is a welcoming community gathering place.

Mission Statement Voted by the Board of Library Trustees: June 18, 2002. Revised September 14, 2009 and January 11, 2016.

Planning Methodology

The Trustees and Director of the Abington Public Library are pleased to present the *Strategic Plan, July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2022*. This plan replaces the *Strategic Plan, July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2015*. The Board of Library Trustees and Library Director chose to extend the *Strategic Plan, July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2015* by two years, through June 30, 2017 primarily due to a major public school building project.

This plan reflects goals and objectives related to the building and student occupation of the new co-located Middle/Senior High School with Pre-Kindergarten. This school is currently being built behind the current High School, adjacent to the Abington Public Library. The final ballot box vote for a debt exclusion to fund this project occurred on October 17, 2014, after the deadline for submitting a new Strategic Plan for FY16. The Trustees and Director intended to submit the new Strategic Plan in the fall of 2015; however this timetable proved unrealistic as the Library Director worked a curtailed schedule from March through October 2015, due to illness.

The *Strategic Planning for Results* method, developed by Sandra Nelson for the Public Library Association, was adopted. An extensive survey was offered from August through November 2015, resulting in 381 responses. A Community Committee was selected and productive focus group meetings were held during December 2015 and January 2016, 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 January 11, 2016.

The *Strategic Plan, July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2022*, 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 their parents/caregivers supported. Survey responses were considered by the Community Committee, as well as by Library Staff and Trustees, and were especially important in identifying measurable objectives necessary to implement goals. 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

Will Adamczyk, Facilitator / Library Trustee / Director, Milton Public Library
Sandy Bumpus, Assistant Librarian for Children's Services, Abington Public Library
Madisen Caferro, Teen Advisory Board Member
Frances Cronin, Friends of the Library Member
Susan Crowley, Library Media Teacher, Abington High School
Cheryl D'Antonio, Abington Business Community and Friends of the Library Member
Amy Fedrick, Teacher, Center School
Kerry Franey, Parent Representative
Abigail Gendreau, Teen Advisory Board Member
Betty Henderson, Library Trustee
Amy Hindle, Children's Librarian, Abington Public Library
Rob MacLean, Community Representative / Director of Library Services, The Tufts Library, Weymouth
Carrie Murray, Parent Representative
Jake O'Neill, Library Trustee
Megan Reid, Teen Advisory Board Member
Chris Sexton, Abington Business Community
Phyllis Wheatley, Friends of the Library Member

Assessment of User Needs

Recent information was gleaned from the United States Census, particularly from the *Abington Quick Facts Table* (<http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/RHI125214/2502300170,00>). *The Town of Abington Master Plan Update, 2009* is the source of many of the local facts and figures detailed below. The Board of Library Trustees and Library Director Deborah Grimmett thank former Abington Town Planner Daniel M. Crane, and the 2009 members of 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 through the mid-2000's. The most recent boom was a result of the restoration of the Old Colony Line commuter rail, which led to great growth in condominium and apartment development. Population growth has slowed since 2010, reflecting an increase of 1.3 % since the most recent U.S. census, from 15,985 in 2010 to 16,197 in 2014. The Old Colony Planning Council projects a population of 16,638 in 2020.

Current Community Conditions

The total number of housing units in town increased from 5,348 in 2000 to 6,377 on April 1, 2010; 70.8% of these units are owner occupied. *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 2015 survey of library users and the 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 in the *Abington Public Library Strategic Plan, 2010 - 2015* and the needs of these population groups continue to grow. The 2010 U.S. census showed that the community is less racially diverse than the national average, with 92.5% of the population identifying as white alone, as compared to 72.4% nationally.

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 strong public school system with the addition of a new co-located Middle and High School with preschool currently under construction, the busy and welcoming public library and well maintained roads. The single greatest challenge facing the town in 2016 is continuing to provide services to residents in the face of economic challenges. The primarily residential tax base, combined with lingering after-effects of the economic crisis of 2009 - 2012, has resulted in very small increases to departmental budgets, including the library over the last couple of years. It is anticipated that residential development in the Union Point Community in South Weymouth will further impact town departments, particularly the Public Library. The Abington Public Library is much closer to Union Point (the former South Weymouth Naval Air Station) than the Tufts Library in Weymouth. At present, more than 3800 housing units are planned for Union Point.

Community Needs

Both the 2015 survey and the 2016 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, electronic and audiovisual materials, on-line reference 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. 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.

User comments from the 2015 survey showed several areas in which residents require additional services. More instruction in how to use the electronic resources available through the Abington Public Library was requested by many commenters. The survey reflected a need to begin offering downloadable video for adults, teens and children. Several users wanted greater hours of service, with the addition of Sunday afternoon hours the most requested. Many patrons requested a greater number and variety of children's and teen programs, and additional book discussion groups and craft programs for adults and senior citizens. Informational lectures for adults were also much requested. The 2016 focus group brought forth these same user needs, adding the need for more visits to and from public school classes when the new school opens. The focus group also suggested adult programs to be held off-site, such as book discussion groups at a local restaurant/bar, which would attract under-served 20-somethings.

Community Vision Statement – 2016

The Community Committee envisioned a vibrant and financially stable Abington. The town's infrastructure is well-kept, with the new co-located Middle, High School and preschool joining the Town Offices and Public Library as the town's center. The community will retain its unique small town identity, while offering more services to residents. The Abington Public Library will continue to be a welcoming place which meets the needs of library users, with financial support which allows for proper maintenance as the building ages. Outreach and advertising of programs and services will increase to meet the needs of underserved populations such as "20-something" adults, students, adult learners and new residents. Creating young readers by providing exemplary early literacy programs and services, and stimulating the imagination of all residents by providing reading, listening, and viewing experiences which expand the mind will continue to be the core services provided by the Abington Public Library, in the building and on-line.

Service Priorities with Goals, Objectives and Action Plan for Fiscal 2018

Strategic Planning for Results lists eighteen roles which are typically played by public libraries within their communities. The primary output of the work completed by the Community Committee was the selection of the service responses most relevant for the Abington Public Library. Four service responses were selected as the primary focus of library activity. Three "second tier" responses will be the focus of some library activity and these activities have been included under the primary service priorities.

Primary Service Priorities

- Create Young Readers: Early Literacy
- Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing and Listening for Pleasure
- Promote Lifelong Learning: Satisfy Curiosity
- Visit a Comfortable Space: Physical and Virtual Spaces

Secondary Service Priorities

- Succeed in School: Homework Help
- Make Career Choices: Job and Career Development
- Express Creativity: Create and Share Content

Service Priority One

Create Young Readers: Early Literacy

“Children from birth to age five will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write, and listen.” (Nelson, p. 165).

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 books, picture books and beginning readers will increase by 2% each year.
- Circulation of non-print materials will increase by 2% each year.
- In-house use of technology, such as computers and tablets, and items such as table top games will increase by 3% each year.

Action Plan for FY18

- Continue rotating dynamic displays of new and featured preschool materials.
- Develop new signage for preschool and parent materials.
- Use tools such as website widgets and social media platforms such as Pinterest to develop and promote bibliographies.
- Offer 4 programs which will introduce in-house technology and games.

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, such as Story Hour, for children age 5 and under that incorporate early childhood educational principles will increase by 3%.
- Participation in programs for children age 5 and under which feature STEM/STEAM activities will increase by 3%.
- Class visits to pre-K and Kindergarten classes will increase by 20% upon the hiring of an Outreach Children’s Librarian to supplement the Youth Services staff.
- Participation by children age 5 and under in the annual Summer Reading Program will increase by 3%.
- Use of the “Tumblebooks” eBook subscription will increase by 5% each year.

Action Plan for FY18

- Continue to offer age-appropriate Toddler and Preschool Story Times, which develop skills necessary for school preparedness.
- Continue to develop programs for children age 5 and under which incorporate STEM and STEAM concepts.
- Promote and evaluate Summer Reading Program participation of children age 5 and under.
- Promote “Tumblebooks” to parents and teachers.
- The Library Trustees will work toward obtaining funding for a part-time Children’s Librarian, specializing in Outreach to facilitate visiting and hosting additional school classes.

Service Priority Two

Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing and Listening for Pleasure

“Residents who want materials to enhance their leisure time will find what they want when and where they want them and will have the help they need to make choices from among the options.” (Nelson, p. 199).

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

Objectives

- Circulation of new adult fiction in print and audio formats will increase by 3% each year.
- Circulation of adult eBooks will increase by 5% each year.
- Circulation of downloadable audio and video materials will increase by 5% each year.
- Participation in book discussion groups and at other programs featuring recreational materials will increase by 5% each year.
- Participation in “Abington Reads” will increase by 5% each year. “Abington Reads” titles alternate between fiction and non-fiction from year to year.
- Participation in programs such as Craft Nights will increase by 5% each year.

Action Plan for FY18

- Continue monthly physical displays of materials on disparate topics.
- Explore options for downloadable video content.
- Research additional ways to use website tools and social media to promote leisure time materials.
- Continue the Friends’ mystery and popular fiction book discussion groups.
- Continue promoting book discussion groups on social media, such as Facebook and Pinterest.
- Offer monthly programs featuring creativity such as Craft Nights.
- Plan and present a comprehensive “Abington Reads” community reads program featuring a fictional work.
- Explore resources to help residents share their creative works with others.

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 2% each year.
- Circulation of children’s and teen eBooks will increase by 10% each year.
- Circulation of children’s and teen downloadable audio materials will increase by 5% each year.
- Circulation of children’s and teen downloadable visual materials will increase by 5% each year.
- Participation in the summer reading program, book discussion groups and at other programs featuring recreational materials will increase by 5% each year.
- Participation in TAB, the Teen Advisory Board will increase by 3% each year.

Action Plan for FY18

- Continue dynamic monthly displays of physical materials on disparate topics.

- Use social media and website tools to promote reading/listening/viewing for pleasure.
- Continue the three book discussion groups for children and teens.
- Continue the summer reading program for children and teens.
- Continue monthly TAB meetings and programs, including literature based after-hours programs.
- Offer six additional programs for children which encourage reading/viewing/listening for pleasure.
- Explore resources to help children and teens share their creative works with others.

Service Priority Three

Satisfy Curiosity: Promote Lifelong Learning

“Residents will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.” (Nelson, p. 195).

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 new adult non-fiction print and audio materials will increase by 3% each year.
- Circulation of downloadable non-fiction eBooks will increase by 5% each year.
- Circulation of downloadable non-fiction audio materials will increase by 5% each year.
- Attendance at library-sponsored informational programs for adults will increase by 5 % each year.
- Participation in “Abington Reads” will increase by 5% each year. “Abington Reads” titles alternate between fiction and non-fiction from year to year.
- Participation in the Non Fiction Book Discussion Group will increase by 10% over five years.
- Use of library sponsored and statewide databases will increase by 3% each year.
- Resources for job seekers will increase 2% each year.

Action Plan for FY18

- Continue the comprehensive weeding plan for the adult non-fiction print collection.
- Study acquisitions of downloadable materials in all formats and increase spending by 5% on Non-Fiction materials.
- Assess adding a tablet/tablets in the Non-Fiction stack area for use as a quick online catalog.
- Offer four programs to assist users with library technology.
- Continue assisting users with library technology on an individual basis.
- Present six informational programs for adults/seniors.
- Continue the monthly Non-Fiction Book Discussion Group for adults and seniors.
- Promote and monitor database usage.
- Reference/Adult Services staff will evaluate print and non-print career resources.

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 physical materials in all formats will increase by 2% each year.
- Circulation of children’s and teen non-fiction eBooks will increase by 5% each year.
- Circulation of children’s and teen downloadable audio and visual materials will increase by 5% each year.
- Attendance at library sponsored informational programs, including programs featuring STEM/STEAM activities for children and teens will increase by 5% each year.

- Use of library sponsored children's and teen databases will increase by 3% each year.
Action Plan for FY18
 - Develop a comprehensive weeding plan for young adult and children's non-fiction collections.
 - Continue dynamic monthly displays of physical materials on disparate topics.
 - Use social media and website tools to promote informational materials in all formats.
 - Continue to offer programs which incorporate STEM/STEAM principles for children and teens, building off the recent Science is Everywhere grant.
 - Present two non-STEM/STEAM informational programs for teens
 - Present two non-STEM/STEAM informational programs for children.
 - Promote and monitor children's and teen database usage.

Service Priority Four

Visit a comfortable place: Physical and virtual spaces

“Residents will have safe and welcoming physical spaces to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read and will have open and accessible virtual spaces that support networking.” (Nelson, p. 210).

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 3% each year.
- Copeland Room exhibits will be recruited and promoted to the community.
- Study Room use will increase by 3% each year.
- Space for people will increase by 2022 as the need for space for physical reference materials decreases.
- Funding building maintenance and repairs will be a budgetary priority; the municipal appropriation for building maintenance and repair will increase by at least 3% each year.
- Participation in community building activities for adults will increase by 3% each year.

Action Plan for FY18

- Evaluate on-line Meeting Room Use application.
- Recruit Copeland Room exhibits for nine of the twelve months.
- Evaluate the study rooms and consider other spaces for small groups.
- Evaluate using the Copeland Room for tutoring one day per week after school.
- Evaluate Reference area with ideas for repurposing space.
- Create and advocate for minimum 3% increase in the municipal appropriation for building repair and maintenance in the FY19 budget.
- Celebrate the 20th anniversary of the library building.
- Actively market current community building activities such as the ongoing jigsaw puzzle.
- Implement an additional ongoing group activity for adults.

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.
- Use of Reader’s Advisory materials on the website will increase by 3% each year.

Action Plan for FY18

- Maintain library policies and trustees minutes on the website.
- Continue using social media, such as Pinterest, and professional tools, such as Booksite, to develop reader’s advisory tools.
- Develop more robust content for book discussion groups.
- Work with the network, and electronic materials vendors to make electronic content easier for readers to access.