

Medway Public Library

Long Range Plan

FY2021 -FY2025

Approved 8/1/2023 by the Medway Library Board of Trustees

Introduction

The Board of Trustees and the Library Director created the 2021-2025 Long Range Plan that summarizes the library's Vision, Mission, Values, Needs, and Goals:

Vision

The Medway Public Library will be recognized in the community as an essential and reliable partner in the delivery of information resources, education, self-advancement, and recreation.

Mission

The Medway Public Library is an indispensable part of the community, dedicated to providing residents of all ages with dynamic collections, innovative programs, and wide-ranging and sustainable services.

Values

We value:

- Our patrons and their opinions, capabilities, needs, and interests
- A skilled, knowledgeable, and courteous staff
- Freedom of information
- Equitable access to library resources and services

Methodology

Beginning in January, 2021, Library Trustees and Library Director Margaret Perkins collaborated to update the Library's strategic plan. Director Margaret Perkins attended a Massachusetts Library System workshop on developing a strategic plan in March, 2021. The Trustees and Director Perkins reviewed and updated the vision, mission and values sections of the previous Strategic Plan, as well as developing the Access, Services and Partnerships and Collaboration sections. A total of eight goals were incorporated into the Strategic Plan. Medway Public Library's Strategic Plan, as developed to that point, was approved by the Trustees on October 5, 2021.

During the development of the Strategic Plan, there were several changes in the Board of Library Trustees.

As of January 2021, the Trustees were:

- Susan Alessandri, Chair
- Lisa Sheehan
- Julie MacEvoy
- John Scott Smith
- Trudi Stefan
- In June, 2021, John Scott Smith was elected Chair.

As of June 2022, the Trustees were:

- John Scott Smith, Chair
- Lisa Sheehan
- Julie MacEvoy
- Greg Peverill-Conti
- Nutan Matthew
- In June 2022, John Scott Smith was re-elected Chair.

As of June 2023, through the present, the Trustees are:

- Greg Peverill-Conti, Chair
- Lisa Sheehan
- Julie MacEvoy
- John Scott Smith
- Nutan Matthew
- In June 2023, Greg Peverill-Conti was elected Chair.

In accordance with the process laid out by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, the Medway Public Library sought community input as part of its long-range planning. The following section captures and reflects insights gained.

On February 1, 2022, the Library Trustees voted to hire Barbara Friedman, a former library director, as a strategic plan consultant. Library Director Margaret Perkins worked with the consultant to develop questions to be presented to focus groups for adults and for teens. The adult focus group consisted of eight adults, including the Select Board Library liaison. Seven of the adults participated via Zoom. During the adult focus group meeting, in addition to questions, participants were shown photographs of various relevant areas of the library. One adult also provided written responses to the questions used during the focus group. A modified set of questions was presented as a written survey to five middle and high school schoolers. This process was completed in August, 2022.

Overall, key themes revolve around enhancing communication and marketing efforts, providing diverse resources for children, addressing space constraints, and engaging in community programs and partnerships.

The key themes and priorities that emerged included:

- **The importance of the library to the community** - it is a resource for both adults and children. Resources cited included books, DVDs, CDs, and periodicals, as well as the wide availability of programs and diverse range of activities offered.
- **The strength of the library's resources** - the staff, spaces (particularly the makerspace and welcoming nature of the children's area), and availability of ILL were all important areas of strength of the library.
- **The need to improve outreach and awareness** - some respondents were unaware of all that is happening in the library. This suggests a need for improved communication and promotion. Informing people about the makerspace, the availability of different resources, and services like converting VHS tapes to digital formats would be welcome.
- **Finding a way to address space constraints** - The library was described as old and facing space issues, which poses challenges in offering different programs. Steps need to be considered to address these limitations to expand and diversify program offerings. Interest was also expressed by a number of respondents in the library providing some outdoor space.
- **Improve the furniture and fittings** - The need for new furniture is mentioned, particularly children's chairs, which were described as "creaky."

The tone of the responses can be described as generally positive and appreciative. They express a sense of enthusiasm and satisfaction towards the library and its services. The use of words like "always," "so many," "great books," "extremely useful," "fond," "friendly," "helpful," and

"knowledgeable" conveys a positive sentiment. The responses also highlight the convenience and accessibility of the library's resources, as well as the enjoyment derived from browsing and discovering books. However, there are also hints of concern or suggestion for improvement, such as the questions about people's awareness of library activities and the need for more information to be broadcasted. Overall, the tone is primarily positive, with a mix of appreciation and constructive suggestions.

Needs

Access

Increasing access to the Library and its resources remains a focus. Patrons would like more weekend hours. We will continue our curbside service as well as after-hours access for public meetings and computer use.

Services

We need to maintain a strong program of offerings for teens, children, adults, and seniors. We need to expand and update all of our collections, including, in particular, more copies of best sellers and more children's books.

Partnerships and Collaboration

We will expand our collaboration with schools, local groups, businesses, and neighboring libraries to enhance services.

Goals

Goal 1: Library services and staff will be accessible, courteous, and responsive to the needs of the community.

Goal 2: The Library will meet the public's needs for current and popular materials, information, education, culture, and entertainment.

Goal 3: Residents of all ages will regard the Medway Public Library as a prominent place to meet and interact with others in the community.

Goal 4: Residents will have access to a variety of innovative programs.

Goal 5: Library patrons will have access to a broad range of technology and a well-equipped Makerspace.

Goal 6: The Library will continue its comprehensive outreach to increase visibility and raise the public's awareness of the many services and opportunities available.

Goal 7: The Library will be an inviting and safe space for our community.

Goal 8: The Library will explore creative ways to ensure fiscal sustainability of library services.

Appendix: Responses

What do you like about the Medway Library?

- The library is an outreach program. It reaches out to kids and adults through programs.
- Always someone to help
- So many resources
- Lots of programs
- Do people know what is going in the library?
- Think of a way of promoting
- Essential role
- Easy to get books, DVDs and CDs
- Treasure the ability to hear about a book or media and get it in a few days.
- Great books in the library; spend a lot of time browsing and its mine for free
- Book request system is extremely useful.
- Very fond of the librarians; extremely friendly;
- Librarians so helpful; take the time to show me around
- Girl scout meetings
- Children love the children's area
- More information needs to be broadcast
- Access to periodicals; don't have to subscribe
- Book request; book sharing; there in 4 or 5 days; pick up locally
- Staff are very knowledgeable.
- Wide availability of resources
- I love how friendly and respectful everyone is.
- I like the free books and spaces to read or study/work on school stuff
- Programs
- The library itself, I look for a new book every time I go
- New book section and the friends sale

What needs to be improved?

- Twitter
- Makerspace has good equipment
- Upgrade 8 mm movie converter (takes 30 minutes; no sound)
- 3 D printer needs training; now may need to be upgraded
- People need to know about makerspace availability
- Computer technologies
- Improve communication to the public: advertising & marketing

- Different things for children to take out: Lego kits, nature kits, unique toys, etc.
- Baking pans in different shapes
- Take old family VHS tapes to DVD discs now. Home movies, Trend is to put on digital format. Need to let people know about putting. Rent out one of the machines out. It takes a long time.
- Library of things: binoculars; tools; (especially for younger people that don't have space to store); Workshop (adding woodworking to makerspace)
- Medway is an old library and has a space issue;
- Struggling with offering different programs due to space needs
- Seed library expanded, advertised; community farm joint program
- Just update the computers and the furniture - eventually new carpeting would be nice
- Maybe more community engagement! More events for kids and young people.
- I think it's fine the way it is
- Art wall
- I can't think of anything but more books
- Additional tech support in the maker space. Summer programs for younger students

What do you think of summer Saturdays, would you use them?

- Half of the group would use the library on summer Saturdays
- 10-2 is adequate.
- Working people would appreciate Saturday hours during summer.
- Good opportunity for grandparents to bring the grandkids.
- Possibly
- Maybe
- Probably not
- Yes
- Yes

Should Saturday hours be extended, how?

- Saturday hours seem adequate...expanded Friday hours would be nice.
- Ideal Saturday hours would be early in the morning or late afternoon
- I think read-alouds for little kids in the morning would be nice
- I could catch up on school work on Saturdays
- It depends
- 10-4
- Open until 2:00

Looking ahead five years, what should be done?

- Makerspace is only new space since 1990
- New furniture...children's chairs are creaky...seating for parents as well as adults
- More room, expand library
- Downstairs rooms: Could there be any reuse of this space?
- Lack of space; space is used in multiple ways; somehow find a way to expand; a challenge for sure.
- Extend parking; Could the land at the back of the library be purchased? Could a small addition to the back be added?
- How best to use the space is a challenge.
- Anything that could be shared; should be shared. Any equipment that could be added should be.
- Can you build up?
- The whole downstairs is all meeting rooms; not sure these are used. ½ the library is meeting rooms; book storage (used for Friends book sale) /makerspaces/etc. Any possible space on lower floor?
- Big conference room used for birthday parties was excellent. Great resource, not well advertised. Not sure about rental fee. Or if this is still offered.
- I would consider updating the furniture and computers
- Online ordering of books should continue, in case someone cannot come in
- Additional soundproofing in the conference rooms. MCA has to install equipment for broadcasting. This would open up programming development by staff and interested members. This is my problem that I will work on now that COVID isn't diminished.

Should the Library find outdoor space?

- Really great to offer outdoor space for library programs, people can use to read, etc.
- Purchase lot.
- Park is close; can library programs be offered there?
- Picnic tables and lots of flooring
- Have an outdoor garden with benches so people can read outside
- Advertise things in Choate Park
- [Something about putting something on the roof]
- Use CPA funds to purchase lot behind library for open space. Add parking and outdoor reading areas

What are competing town needs for municipal money?

- In the process of spending for a new water tank.
- Town Hall
- Library is in need of upgrades; It's obvious that the library needs some updating; not too much competing in the town.
- New school libraries and new school waterfountains
- Town-wide suggestion box for when everyone is occupied
- Sidewalks on Holliston Street
- Town needs new fire station and expansion of the police station. New town hall will be a tough sell. Elementary schools need to be refurbished and brought up to today standards

Suggest Programs

- Programming in arts and crafts; knitting and crocheting; talks on gardening; farming
- Neighbors are ESLers... English as a second language programs
- Programs for seniors
- School of Rock – teaching kids how to form a rock band-different aspects of playing in a group
- Paint nights for adults and kids
- Form a foreign language section: Lack of children's books and adult books in Spanish and other languages.
- Making people aware that programs are being offered. Slow in bringing things back. Now's the time to bring back concerts, etc.
- More advertising of the makerspace would encourage more people to come. It already has a lot of potential.
- Children's read alouds, outdoor reading garden, more places to relax
- I like the cosplay club
- Summer programming for especially middle schoolers.

What do you spend on internet, streaming services, books, media, etc. How can the library save you money?

- Annual range of yearly spending in the focus group: \$1500...\$2100 ... \$2500-\$3000... (most of the people in the focus group are already heavy library users, so they save a great deal on books, DVDs and CDs and attending programs (although not recently).
- Participants felt other people might save money if they knew about library services.
- People mentioned ways other people save money by using the library:

- Programs
- Streaming service (Hoopla)
- Ebooks (Libby)
- Lunch program
- Do not want to think about this. Everybody here but me uses kindles. I still like the feel of a book.

What service does the Library provide within the community?

- The Library is a place where you can get any service if there is a need.
- A place to get all forms of media. Would love to see expanded to offer more and varied things.
- View it as a Community Center
- Library is a hub and this should be preserved.
- A source of education, and a peaceful place to focus
- Community engagement, education - a safe place
- Helps as a place for town public programs and a wide selection of books
- Education and a safe space for all
- Library needs to fill some of the social gaps in town. Newcomers need support in understanding small towns and as the demographics change we will see language issues

Talk about your ideal library

- The Wellesley Library: gigantic, new, multiple floors, bigger the better (more programs)
- Wakefield Library with spiral staircases and big foyer, but with homey feel. Size is the one thing that makes the Medway Library not ideal
- Eastham library, old with nooks and crannies... I like the comfy older feeling of Medway
- New Stoughton Library is all glass and shine, but doesn't have homey feeling
- A library should feed the needs of the people. Important for people to understand that Medway is not just books; important that all the people in Medway understand what libraries do.
- I like the Library as is, perhaps esthetics could be improved (Wellesley is aspirational).
- An ideal library is huge! More different things that can be circulated (Vinyl records, library of things, and a lot of stuff)
- Lots of natural light, open floor plan and lots of clean whites and greys.
- Bright and modern, lots of windows and plants. Places to study and curl up and read, and fun programs for all people
- Any library