

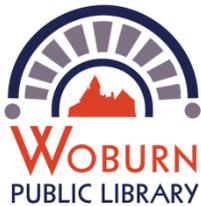
WOBURN PUBLIC LIBRARY

HUB OF THE COMMUNITY



STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FISCAL YEARS 2024–2028

Submitted by:



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Woburn Public Library

Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024–2028



Woburn Public Library
By: Vath. Sok (www.vathana.com)

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INTRODUCTION

Woburn Public Library's history began over 200 years ago. In 1789, just days before George Washington was inaugurated as the country's first President, the Woburn Public Library was established as a social library.

In 1854, Woburn resident Jonathan Bowers Winn served as a delegate to the State Convention to revise the State's Constitution. He offered the \$300 salary he received as a delegate to found a public library contingent upon the Town providing matching funds, which it did.

In 1856, Woburn's first public library opened in a room in the Municipal Building.

Upon his death in 1875, Charles Bowers Winn, Jonathan's son, left the town a sizeable bequest (\$140,000) "to be used and disposed of for the purpose and interest of a public library."

Henry Hobson Richardson, the well-known architect who designed Boston's Trinity Church, was chosen to design the original Library building. It was the first library H. H. Richardson designed. It was declared a national landmark on December 23, 1987.

In 2017, the Woburn Public Library moved to a temporary location to facilitate a major renovation and expansion project during which the historic landmark was beautifully restored.

On March 16, 2019, the Library reopened to the public with a significant 30,500-square-foot addition to the original 19,700-square-foot building. The newly restored, renovated, and expanded facility is an architectural marvel that enhances the historic building. It houses a spacious Children's Library, the Woburn Public Library's first Teen Room, a Maker Space, spaces for studying, meeting, and quiet reading, as well as a large community meeting room.

The Library is in an exciting time of transition and is continually adapting to the new reality of the current pandemic. However, we remain focused on providing the best service possible to our Woburn community.

The Library's Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2028 is flexible; it is designed to accommodate our community's evolving needs. Over the next five years, we look forward to broadening the Library's reach into Woburn's rapidly changing community and enriching the City's diversity.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Community Overview

Woburn Community Profile

40,876
2020 Population

- 19.2% are foreign born
- 23% speak a language other than English at home
- 19.3% are under age 18
- 16% is 65 and older
- Median Household Income is \$92,084
- Median home value is \$486,600

AGE DISTRIBUTION

Demographics

Race	Percentage
Mixed Race	2.8%
African American	4.7%
Hispanic	6.3%
Asian	10.1%
White	76.5%

Woburn Public Schools

4,279
2021- 2022 Enrollment*

- 47% High Needs
- 32.2% Economically Disadvantaged
- 8% English Learners
- 17.6% Students w/ Disabilities

*reportcards.doe.mass.edu/2021/districtreportcard/3470000

Education Level

Education Level	Percentage
Bachelors Degree or Higher	47.1%
Some College	22%
High School Only	25.6%
Less Than HS	5.3%

Source: census.gov/quickfacts/woburncitymassachusetts

Woburn Public Library FY 2022

BY THE NUMBERS

- Open 65 hours per week.
- Population: 40,876.
- Staff of 27, with 9 holding MLS Degrees.

Social Media



81,227
Library Visitors



15,245
Library Cardholders



84,864
Items Owned



1,541
New Library
Cards

228,135
Items Checked
Out

355
Programs



6,483
Attendees



259
Artifact Room
Visits

1,067
Museum Pass
Reservations



2,256
Study Room
Reservations

300
Archives
Questions
Answered



At Your Service

Jan-July 2022

19,865

Questions Answered



1,002
Scans/Faxes



Wi-Fi Accessed
9,928 Times



58
3D Print Jobs



2,214
Database
Searches*



*Jan-May

5,936
Printouts



Computers Used
4,220 Times



OUR PLANNING PROCESS

In January 2022, the Library engaged Barbara Alevras of Sage Consulting Services to guide us through the Strategic Planning Process. Consultant Alevras guided us through a series of activities designed to get feedback from the community and key stakeholders in the community. A customized flowchart served as our roadmap as we progressed through the process (see *Appendix A—WPL Strategic Planning Project Process Flowchart*).

At the start of the process, we invited community members to serve on our Strategic Planning Advisory Committee (SPAC). We included representatives from city government, local organizations, schools, the community, Library Trustees, Library Foundation, and Library staff.

This 11-member committee supported the project by:

- Brainstorming community visioning statements describing what they considered to be the ideal Woburn; and
- Prioritizing the vision statements that the Library can best support with its resources and activities (see *Appendix B—WPL Community Vision Statement Results Report 2022*).

Some SPAC members also participated in other strategic planning activities.

Between January and June, the Library conducted a series of virtual assessment activities:

- One Community Visioning Exercise;
- Five Focus Groups;
- Five Interviews;
- Three Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) Exercises; and
- Two Surveys (one Community Survey and one Teen Survey).



Data collected from the assessment activities was analyzed, synthesized, and summarized. The results formed the basis of the Mission and Vision Statements; the Goals and Objectives; and the Community Visioning Statements included in this Strategic Plan.

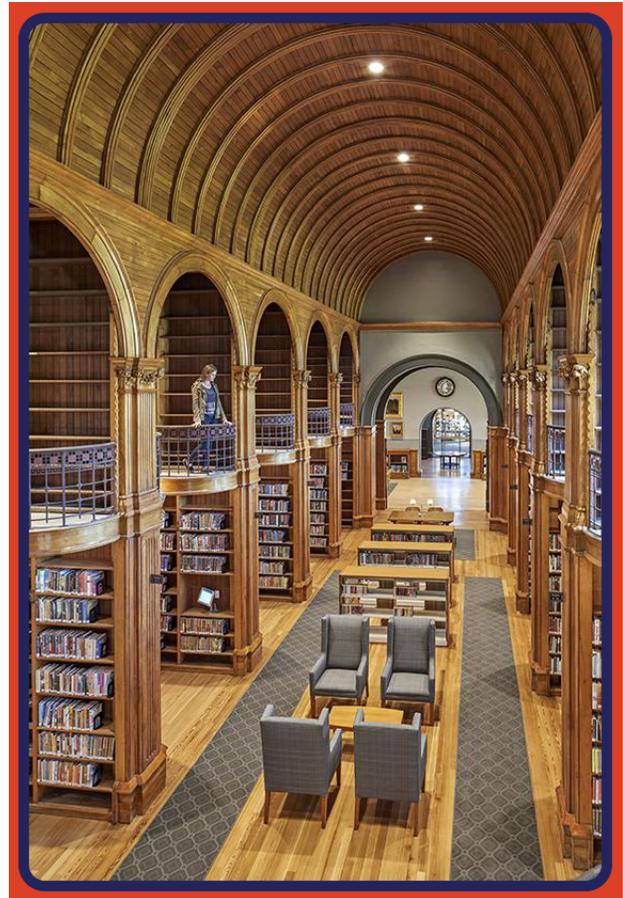
WHAT WE DISCOVERED

Feedback received during the assessment phase offered important insights regarding the staff's, the Board of Trustees', the WPL Foundation Board's, and the community's perceptions of the current Library and expectations for the future.

Community input yielded information regarding major Library strengths as well as challenges to be addressed. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Many creative ideas were shared. There is much the Library can do moving forward to provide more inclusive, accessible services to an increasingly diverse community.

The most commonly mentioned initiatives relate to the following categories:

- **Collections:** Expand, improve, and diversify the book collection; grow the large print book collection; expand the Library of Things (non-traditional items available for borrowing); offer a wide selection of music CDs; improve the audiobook collection; expand digital borrowing for children; add graphic novels and magazines for teens; expand video and board game collections for teens; and offer more puzzles and toys for children.
- **Facility:** The facility was described as beautiful and very clean. There were some requests for more meeting, reading, study, and work spaces; improved accessibility for disabled patrons; improved signage; and improved landscaping.
- **Management and Operations:** Feedback regarding the staff's knowledge, friendliness, and helpfulness was extremely complimentary. There were some suggestions to add staff and expand the weekend operating hours.
- **Marketing:** There was also a desire for enhanced website navigation and accessibility; more outreach and collaborations with local groups and organizations; more frequent communications via more channels/platforms; and increased and improved promotion of Library offerings.



- **Programs:** Many suggestions were submitted to add programs for all ages. These include outdoor programs; intergenerational programs; programs targeting various age groups and situations (e.g., new adults, caregivers); more accessible, diverse, and inclusive programs; and local history programs.
- **Services:** Interest was expressed in having the Library expand the discounted museum pass program; offer foreign language and translation services; and increase access to the Maker Space.
- **Technology:** Community members expressed interest in technology classes and support; increased access to technology resources; assistance with navigating online resources; improved accessibility to the website for the deaf/hard-of-hearing community; and extended Wi-Fi accessibility around the building's grounds.

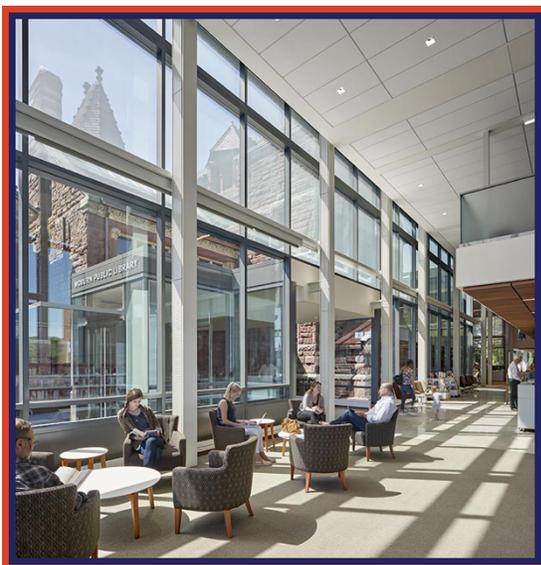


Capstone Ceremony 2018

OUR PLAN

Community Vision Statements

The Library's 11-person strategic planning advisory committee brainstormed and prioritized a series of vision statements reflecting the ideal Woburn. Following is the community vision statement this group believes the Library can best support and positively impact:



Woburn welcomes individuals and families from diverse backgrounds and has systems in place to ensure all residents are supported and included in the community.

The full community visioning exercise results are presented in *Appendix B—WPL Community Vision Statement Results Report 2022*.

Library Tagline

Woburn Public Library, Hub of the Community

Library Vision Statement

Woburn Public Library advances the needs of the community in all areas of literacy, in workforce development, in civic engagement, in culture, and in lifelong learning. The Library welcomes individuals and families from diverse backgrounds and has systems in place to ensure all residents are supported and included.

Mission Statement

Woburn Public Library connects the community to resources, services, and experiences that educate, enrich, and entertain.

Strategic Goals and Supporting Objectives

GOAL 1: COLLECTIONS, RESOURCES, AND SPACE

The Library will serve as a safe, welcoming community hub and valuable resource for individuals and families from diverse backgrounds.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Offer robust physical and digital collections and resources that reflect the interests of diverse community groups.
2. Expand and increase the use of the Library of Things.
3. Develop and promote programs and services that meet the needs and desires of community members of all ages and abilities (e.g., Maker Space programs, discounted museum passes).
4. Maintain a safe, comfortable, accessible, and attractive facility that accommodates various functional needs (e.g., reading, study, meeting, and social spaces).
5. Increase technology literacy and access to technology devices, services, and support.

GOAL 2: YOUTH, SERVICES, AND RESOURCES

The Library will offer an expansive variety of youth services and resources.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Grow and promote STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) programs and initiatives for youth of all ages and abilities.
2. Offer family-friendly performances and activities.
3. Promote youth activities that accommodate diverse learning styles and needs.
4. Support public school and homeschool education.
5. Expand the programs, resources, and services offered to teens (grades 6-12).

GOAL 3: LIBRARY AWARENESS

Community members will be aware of and enjoy easy access to Library programs, services, and resources.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Increase awareness and usage of the vast array of Library resources, services, and spaces.
2. Strengthen and expand collaborations with community partners to promote the Library and increase usage.
3. Expand outreach to new and underserved constituencies.

GOAL 4: COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

The Library’s knowledgeable staff and strong community collaborations will improve the Library’s support of underserved local populations.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Support a growing population of immigrants.
2. Improve accessibility to Library offerings for all ages and abilities.
3. Celebrate community members’ ethnic, cultural, and faith-based backgrounds and interests.

GOAL 5: ENSURE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE LIBRARY

Sustain the Library’s impact through developing and establishing public/private partnerships and staff development.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Ensure the annual municipal appropriation meets minimum state standards.
2. Strengthen public and private support and advocacy for the Library.
3. Increase community groups’ use of the Library’s meeting spaces.
4. Cultivate public/private partnerships that increase the Library’s positive impact on the community.
5. Provide ongoing staff training and development opportunities.
6. Operate with a strong governance model that supports the Library’s mission.

Annual Action Plans

The Library will develop an annual *Action Plan* made up of specific activities and strategies designed to help the Library achieve its strategic goals and address changing needs. The *Action Plan* will be updated and submitted to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners annually (see *Appendix C—WPL Action Plan Fiscal Year 2024*).

Measuring and Communicating Our Progress

Quarterly, the Library director will assess progress toward meeting the Strategic Plan’s goals and review success, challenges, and necessary adjustments with the staff and Board of Trustees. Annually, the director will present an overview of Strategic Plan performance highlights to the community.

PLAN APPROVAL

On September 13, 2022, the Library’s eight-person Board of Trustees unanimously approved this *Strategic Plan*.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Richard Mahoney, President
- Joanne McNamee, Vice President
- Maria Alves, Trustee
- Tracy Jolly, Trustee
- Jim Juliano, Trustee
- Seth Libert, Trustee
- Emily Lipsett, Trustee
- Larry Rideout, Trustee



Trustees (L to R): Joanne McNamee, Jim Juliano, Tracy Jolly, Larry Rideout, and Richard Mahoney
Missing: Maria Alves, Seth Libert, and Emily Lipsett



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Library is grateful for the feedback from hundreds of people who live and work in Woburn. We are especially grateful for the following community members' input:

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Christine Williams
Colleen Cormier
Connie McGilvary
Dale Goldstein
David Crowley
Deshea Harris
Elaine Dougherty
Elise Regan
Emily Lipsett
Ernest Doherty

Gerry Kehoe
James Juliano
Jasmine
Parthasarathy
Jeff Dillon
Jen Hess
Jen Mahon
Joanne McNamee
Joe Leto
Jonathan Acheson
Judith Duvivier
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Julie Pena
June Mackenzie
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Megan Kass
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Paul Kasili
Regina Au
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Sue Ellen Holland
Thelma Davis
Woburn Public Library Staff

We would also like to thank staff member Tracy Breeden for developing the Community and Library Profile infographics presented on pages 4 and 5.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The entire strategic planning process was conducted virtually. Its success is a testament to how well we adapted to the constraints and changes that followed the pandemic's peak period. The Woburn Public Library's staff and trustees are committed to proactively responding to the needs and interests of our growing and changing community. Over the next five years, we will solicit feedback and adjust our policies, practices, and resources to ensure we continually expand and improve our services.



APPENDICES

Following is a list of Strategic Plan document appendices. They are available for download and review at the following link: <https://woburnpubliclibrary.org/strategic-plan>

Appendix A—WPL Strategic Planning Project Process Flowchart: The flowchart presents the Library’s planning methodology, including the timeline, assessment mechanisms, and process participants.

Appendix B—WPL Community Vision Statement Results Report 2022: The Library’s strategic planning advisory committee brainstormed a series of vision statements reflecting the ideal Woburn and prioritized the vision statements the Library can best support and positively impact. This report presents the results of the committee’s community visioning activities.

Appendix C—WPL Action Plan Fiscal Year 2024: The Library’s Action Plan presents specific tasks for completion during the first year of the Strategic Plan.

Appendix D—WPL Community Survey Results Summary Report 2022: The community survey was conducted in May and June 2022. A summary of the results is presented in addition to graphs and charts.

Appendix E—WPL Focus Group Summary Report 2022: This report presents highlights of the feedback and ideas about the Library’s collections, services, and staff generated in a series of five focus groups conducted with 17 community members.

Appendix F—WPL Interview Summary Report 2022: This report presents highlights of the feedback and ideas about the Library’s collections, services, and staff generated in a series of five interviews conducted with six community members.

Appendix G—WPL SOAR Exercise Summary Results Report 2022: This report documents the results of three environmental assessments of the Library’s strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results. One was conducted with the Library’s staff and another with the Woburn Public Library Foundation’s officers and the Library’s Board of Trustees.

Appendix H—WPL Teen Survey Results Summary Report 2022: The teen survey was conducted in May and June 2022 for youths in grades 6-12. A summary of the results is presented in addition to graphs and charts.

