WOODBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY
VOLUMES OF ADVENTURE AWAIT

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2024
Why Strategic Planning?

A strategic plan is a necessary tool for a library for many reasons. Primarily, it is a management tool to identify strengths and weaknesses. Developing a new plan gives us the opportunity to speak with stakeholders in our community and find out where they think we excel and where we may need to improve.

A strategic plan helps the library staff and board to budget, prioritize activities, and plan for the future.

A current plan with the library's mission and vision statements, goals with measurable objectives, and a technology plan is necessary if we want to apply for a construction grant for expansion from the state library.

A strategic plan gives a clear sense of purpose for the library staff, trustees, friends, and volunteers.
Message From the Chair

It gives me great pleasure to present Woodbury Public Library’s Strategic Plan for FY2020-FY2024. This plan provides a framework for the library to meet the needs of the community with exceptional service, programming, and materials for all ages. It was developed based on input from Woodbury residents who attended our community forum, a town-wide survey, and interviews with over 18 community leaders. We also targeted high-school students in Woodbury to find out what they know about our library. This has been a long process, and a lot of effort went into it by a Strategic Plan Sub-Committee made up of Board of Trustee Members, Friends of the Library, and Library Staff. (see acknowledgments)

Woodbury is fortunate that our library’s daily operations are in the very talented and competent hands of Director, Susan Piel and her staff. This Strategic Plan is intended to be a living document, providing a continuing touchstone for staff yet flexible enough to change as our town evolves. The Board of Trustees, or their appointed sub-committee, as well as the library director, will officially review and update the plan yearly, at a minimum. The plan addresses the need for larger space as the library continues to be the heart of the community while it preserves the town’s past and prepares for the future. We are working to grant access to all information and be a leader in innovation while we promote literacy and continue to offer lifelong learning and entertainment for all of Woodbury’s residents, young and old.

The Woodbury Public Library aims to be a gathering space for the community to access each other’s ideas and a place where information about vital services can be found. The objectives in this plan will help us improve services to children, teens, and families so that everyone has access to tools that spark curiosity and nurture learning. We will also continue to maintain a collection and access to local history; to continue to connect the past, present, and future; and to continue to maintain a state-of-the-art gallery that exhibits juried artists who will attract more visitors, educators, and students.

Providing books and information is an important and vital part of our mission, but we also want to show how information can be used to explore, entertain, and create. Through this plan we will celebrate and support the writers, artists, and makers in our community and provide people of all ages a place to create, collaborate, and learn how to problem-solve. As part of the planning process, we have developed a Vision Statement, as you will see on the next page.

The library is here to serve the community. If you have any thoughts or ideas, we’d love to hear them at any time!

Lisa Amatruda
Chair, Woodbury Public Library Board of Trustees
Mission and Vision Statements

Mission Statement
The mission of the Woodbury Public Library is to strengthen and empower the community by using multiple media platforms and technologies to provide information, services, and programs that educate, inspire, entertain, and advance understanding and quality of life for people of all ages.

Vision Statement
It is the Library's vision to be the first choice for authoritative information; offer lifelong learning, entertainment, and inspiration; excel in customer service; assure equitable access to all resources and services, and be a dynamic force in our community.
Goal #1: To Actively Fundraise to Enlarge Woodbury Public Library’s Existing Space

Woodbury Public Library has been our town’s first choice for lifelong learning, entertainment, and inspiration for many years. However, as our staff and public know and our recent survey shows, we are woefully out of room for growth. A library building of 12,000 square feet should house 60,000 items. We are currently holding 93,000. A comment recently received from a frequent patron states:

“The Director and her staff are doing wonders in a cramped facility. It is time for the town to recognize the need to expand.”

We have an aging building that has been “upgraded” in many ways in the past several years. We added a computer lab on the main floor and installed WiFi extenders to improve our Internet connectivity throughout the building and to keep up with the demand for current technology. The Jack Naylor Children’s Library is a vibrantly redesigned space with a new paint job, carpet, shelving, and other furnishings. The Teen space, which was carved out of a portion of the reference section, has been made more welcoming with new carpet, furniture, and a colorful paint job, as well.

Our Gallery renovation, completed in May 2018, is a tremendous “addition.” It offers a professional art exhibit space, drawing more patrons into our library to view the monthly offerings. It is also a pleasing space for library programming that the staff can be proud of promoting.

Upstairs, beyond the Children’s Library, we carved a quiet study room out of our former staff room, gaining another meeting room, as well. This back area also has been painted. Of note, almost all of this work was completed with donated funds!

Upgrading remains to be done on the first floor, which is in serious need of a new carpet and a fresh coat of paint. Renovation of our copper roof also needs to be completed. One of our HVAC units currently is being replaced, but two other replacements also need to be scheduled.

When all of this work is done, the library should be in a good place for a little longer—at least as far as the building is concerned. However, a town as vibrant as Woodbury needs a plan for the future of its library.

In this document, we will share our goals for the next five years. The most important of course is to gain more space for our collections, programming, and other community needs such as meeting rooms and a local history room. We will also share comments from patrons—(gained from the town-wide survey) and community stakeholders about our strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities.

Action Steps:

1a. To discuss options for expansion with town officials by 4/15/2020

1b. To have the Library Board of Trustees outline a definitive fundraising plan with specific goals by 5/31/2020
Goal 2: To Continue to Be the Heart of the Community

Woodbury Public Library continues to serve as the heart of the community of Woodbury. As comments from the community survey spell out, for a small town library, we excel in the selection of materials and programming for all ages.

These comments are taken from our recent community survey:

*Woodbury Library does a great job of providing space and facilities for much of modern life: books, large print books, computers, wifi, on-line resources including financial and analytical resources, interesting programs and events, newspapers and magazines and even children’s computers. As society tries to put more and more pressure on schools and libraries to solve all of society’s ills (somewhat unfairly), our library is doing a great job of keeping up to par, informing and entertaining us. We need only ask. Thank you for your creative efforts.*

Action Steps:

2a. To compile a complete listing of current community groups and services, to be updated annually

2b. To support community organizations in all their endeavors by offering opportunities for exposure and awareness of each group’s purpose. Letters will be sent to every community group in town promoting a listing on the library website. Goal is 100% participation.

2c. To continue to highlight the arts by showcasing area artists in our newly renovated Gallery monthly

2d. To explore additional ways to promote Woodbury businesses by featuring their goods and services in our Community Case. The goal will be to increase the number of businesses featured by 50% by contacting the Chamber of Commerce and the Woodbury Business Association.

2e. To increase homebound delivery service to aging and disabled patrons by 50% and highlight this service in the senior community center promotional materials at least once a year
2f. To collaborate at least twice a year with the Parks and Recreation and Senior Center departments to plan large-scale, diverse, quality programming for the whole community

From the American Library Association website:

Public Libraries: There are more public libraries than Starbucks in the U.S. — a total of 16,568, including branches. Nearly 100% of public libraries provide Wi-Fi and have no-fee access to computers. In 2016, there were 1.4 billion in-person visits to public libraries across the U.S., the equivalent of about 4 million visits each day. That’s 2,664 per minute. There were 113 million attendees at public library programs in 2016, more than all Major League Baseball, National Football League, and National Basketball Association games combined. That’s 16.5 million more than in 2013. Libraries play a critical role in the happiness of Americans. Communities that spend more on libraries, parks and highways are shown to support the well-being of community members.
Goal 3: To Preserve the Town’s Past and Prepare for its Future

Woodbury is a town rich in history, and the public library is an important repository for making sure that information can be disseminated to the public. We also recognize the need to increase awareness of our services to all our town’s residents, especially newcomers.

Action Steps:

3a. To increase our website usage statistics on the town’s historical archives by 10%

3b. To promote the local history collection stored at the library and, working with the Old Woodbury Historical Society, send a town-wide mailing to increase its usage by 10% (see Action Step 4a.)

3c. To increase the digital collection of materials available to the public by 10%

3d. To continue to offer a welcome packet explaining our diverse services to 100% of new patrons

3e. To share information about library resources and services with residents new to town by sending welcome letters. Goal is 100% participation, which will be accomplished every quarter with the help of the Assessor’s office, the Tax Collector, and Registrars of Voters.
Goal 4: To Grant Access to All Information and to Lead in Technological Innovation

Libraries continue to evolve with new technology, and Woodbury Library is no different. We strive to add new databases as they are introduced and as our knowledgeable patrons demand. Patrons are definitely streaming and downloading more materials as they become aware of our offerings, and the library will continue to monitor the digital collections.

Action Steps:

4a. To send a mailing to 100% of Woodbury households to spread the word about the public library’s resources

4b. To maintain our fiber connection by partnering with Connecticut’s trusted Internet partner, CEN (Connecticut Education Network)

CEN is our state premier provider of high performance internet services, and the library goal is to consistently offer Internet speeds that keep up with heavy patron use and demands.

4c. To purchase new hardware/software as it becomes available, so newer sites/technology will remain compatible

4d. To log 20% more “hits” per year on the new WPL website when it is introduced in 2020

4e. To increase our “one-on-one” appointments, to assist patrons with technology support, by 50%

4f. To increase monthly statistics for streaming movies by 10%
Goal 5: To Promote Literacy For ALL AGES — Most specially, the Children’s Department of the Woodbury Public Library offers a welcoming place for children and caregivers to

Read, Play, Grow

...together, as well as select books, relax in the playroom, craft together, or snuggle up in the reading nook.

Librarians are always available to answer questions and guide your child in finding the right book. A variety of programs offer fun and educational opportunities for children from birth to age 11.

Action Steps for Children

5a. Children’s Librarians will evaluate their space usage annually to ensure proper allocation of resources.

5b. Assess the size of the collection annually. Monthly reports are computer generated to gauge the size of the collection and determine growth or how much material to delete from the shelves.

5c. Evaluate changeable “Makerspace” stations monthly and update as needed

5d. Promote “1000 books before Kindergarten” program with 100% of pre-K children
5e. Increase attendance at afterschool programs by 10%
5f. Develop parameters for a new service called “Library in a Bag,” by Summer 2020

Action Steps for Teens

5g. Increase collaboration with Region 14 schools by implementing quarterly conversations
5h. Increase Teen program attendance by 20% annually
5i. Increase awareness of available resources and programming though quarterly sharing with Region 14 educators and students

Action Step for Adults

5j. To promote literacy for adults by purchasing materials, offering programs, and hosting literacy volunteers annually

Goal 6: To Continue Offering Lifelong Learning and Entertainment

Woodbury residents demand current literature and non-fiction material, and library staff will continue to research for appropriate program opportunities.

Action Steps:

6a. Evaluate community needs monthly for entertainment materials and programming ideas
6b. Increase awareness of the ability to collaborate on programs with other community organizations by 20%
6c. Continue to display high quality art exhibits for community inspiration in the Gallery, which will be chosen at monthly meetings by the Art Exhibition committee
6d. Continue to provide adult, teen, and children’s computer and app coding class opportunities, and to expand them by 50%
History of Woodbury Public Library

Woodbury’s first library was established in 1772, but was in existence for only a few years. Today’s library has its roots in the Woodbury Library Association which began in 1851 with a collection of 200 books and was located on the second floor of the Town Hall.

The Library was governed by a few basic rules.

Books could be drawn on the first Thursday of each month, and three-cent fines were levied for damages such as turned down pages or ink spots.

On June 14th, 1897 all assets of the Woodbury Library Association were transferred to the Town of Woodbury.

After 1902 the library was housed in the former Parker Academy building. Initially, the library only occupied the first floor, but by the 1960’s it occupied all three floors, with the children’s floor in the basement. The Parker Academy building was lowered in 1980, when the current library was constructed. The new building brought many changes, but the most important was having a place for patrons to sit and even have meetings. The building underwent renovations in 1997.

Today, our 12,000-square-foot building houses 93,000 items in a facility designed for 60,000 items.

We have evolved with the times in the past 10 to 12 years by updating children’s and teen services, updating the Gallery, offering more programming and incorporating more technology.
Appendix A: Woodbury Public Library Survey Results—for Adults 18 & up

702 responses were received from our survey. Here are some highlights:

Where does the library EXCEL? (Top choices)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The library provides a wide variety of books, audiobooks and DVDs.</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The library staff exceeds expectations.</td>
<td>77.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The library provides interesting and informative programs.</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The library serves as a community gathering space</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
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Services Used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Checked out books or other materials</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received help from a librarian</td>
<td>70.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended a program</td>
<td>54.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewed an art exhibit or attended an opening</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessed the Internet/Wifi</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read magazines or newspapers</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
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Reasons for not using the library:

- The library hours or location are not convenient.
- I prefer to buy my own books or other materials.
- The library does not have the materials I need or want.
- I do not have access to necessary transportation.
- I am physically unable to do so.
- I use another library.
- Total Respondents that don’t use the library: only 33
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>DON'T KNOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel welcome and comfortable at the library. 96.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is easy for me to get to the library. 96.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>The library website is useful to me. 71.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>The library is an important place for the community to gather. 86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>I value the library’s programming. 81.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>The library resources are available to everyone, including those with disabilities. 75.6%</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The physical location is important. 92%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I am willing to pay additional property taxes to provide expanded library services or hours. 50% (30% don’t know)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Under-18 Survey Responses

Thanks to Nonnewaug High School Principal Pam Sordi, we have a high percentage of participation from high school students: 314, though only 124 have a Woodbury Public Library card. We realize Bethlehem students attend the high school, as well as students from other towns through the Vocational Agriculture program.

Most of the students don’t realize the resources we have to offer them, so we will be addressing that as a primary goal for this age group.

What high school students value most about Woodbury Public Library
Appendix B: Woodbury Community Leader Interviews and Comments

Two teams of two people each met separately with the town leaders below. We asked them a few questions about the Woodbury Public Library and about their thoughts on current unmet needs and possible future ones. We offered them the opportunity to provide any additional feedback they wanted to include in our strategic plan rewrite.

Overall, the comments were positive and enlightening. Most comments centered around the need for more space for the library. Some of these community leaders do not live in Woodbury, but we still talked with them for input about libraries in general.

One fact that remains evident is our community is not well aware of the resources already offered by the library. We have addressed this fact with action steps spelled out in this document.

Barbara Perkinson, First Selectman
Mike Gransky, Selectman
George Hale, Selectman
Rick Richardson, President, Woodbury Business Association
Rudy Mazurosky, Publisher, Voices
Arthur Milnor, Flanders Nature Center, Director
Wayne Anderson, Public Building Commission
David Schultz, Chairman, Republican Town Committee
Lesa Peters, Chairman, Democratic town Committee
Robert LaBonne, President, LaBonnes Market
Bob Taylor, Community Services
John Pittari, President, New Morning Market
Loryn Ray, Director of Senior Center
Pam Sordi and Julie Luby, Nonnewaug High School Principals
William Nemec, Middle School Principal
Jodie Roden, Mitchell School Principal
Joseph A. Olzacki, Superintendent Region 14

Some noteworthy comments and recommendations
“Need larger space to be information system for the entire town”
“Library is cultural center of town”
“Expand library as a resource for town; have town meetings, sports sign-up location (anything for youth development), non-profits meeting location to get them in the library and then wow them”
“Offer Interview Skills and Life Skills”
“Develop anything to promote Readership: Reader workshops, book talks, book club for HS students with incentives (free ipad, etc.), older kids' pair with younger kids, tours of library, etc.”
“Consider a smaller reading program (like summer reading program) during Christmas and spring break”
“Add Drivers Ed to get HS students in the library”
“Need more space for groups and kids for meetings and gatherings”
“More folks may benefit from opportunities for introductory, intermediate and advanced IT and social media training”
“I would like to see greater recognition and advanced planning to move totally into a learning and meeting center in the next generation of the age of digital, IT, live-streaming and AI”
“Need a larger building to be the information system for the entire town”
“The WPL has done a good job reinventing itself and keep in touch with community needs. Programs are good and robust, especially for the youth”
“The State of Connecticut should provide high speed internet access to the town through the library”
“Need to raise money to increase space of the library”
“I would love to see more geography in the WPL; maybe a big world map painted on the blank wall”
“Add bus transportation for young high school kids to the library from the NHS”
Appendix C: Summary of “SWOT”

**Strengths:** Helpful and welcoming staff, diverse programming, well-chosen collection, technology assistance, Bibliomation consortium of shared materials and staffing assistance, Book Cellar, hours open, community space, Friends of the Library, intelligent use of available space, poet laureate, Volunteers, WOW as a collaboration with other town departments to increase programming opportunities

**Weaknesses:** No space remaining to grow, no parking, very little quiet space, not enough reading space, teen space is too small, teen space needs a computer lab, more ebooks needed, local history area needs to expand, more meeting space is needed

**Opportunities:** Grant support from the state to expand or rebuild, opportunity to educate the town on the library’s resources, ability to have a greater positive impact on town residents, a larger teen space, accessible meeting room(s), available 24 hours/7 days a week, more tutoring spaces

**Threats:** Other town departments with greater need for renovation and/or expansion
Appendix D: Welcome to the Woodbury Public Library’s

1,000 BOOKS BEFORE KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM!

Did you know that reading to your child is one of the most powerful ways to boost his or her brain power? The simple and enjoyable act of sharing books helps your child learn pre-reading skills such as understanding the sounds letters make, developing a bigger vocabulary, and building background knowledge—all important skills that help prepare your child for learning to read and entering kindergarten.

Woodbury Public Library’s 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program is a fun, exciting, and free way to start your child on the path to success! Children from birth to five years old can participate.

Register: Sign up at Woodbury Public Library. Pick up program materials at the library.
Track Your Reading: Write down each book you read with your child on your reading record.
Every Book Counts: Even if your child wants to hear the same book again and again, you can count it each time. You can also count the books your child hears in storytime, in daycare or preschool, or with a friend or family member, as long as your child listens to the entire book.
100-Book Milestones: Each time you read 100 books, bring your reading record to the library to receive a special reward.
1,000 Books: You did it! Come celebrate at the library and receive a free book and gift certificate to the Book Cellar.
Keep on Reading: Don’t stop at 1,000! Keep on reading together; there’s more learning ahead!

Singing songs, saying rhymes, telling stories, and playing with your child are all great ways to build his or her literacy skills. Visit the Woodbury Public Library often for free programs that are fun and educational for your little one, and to find great books to share with your child.

One thousand books may seem like a lot, but if you read just one book a night, you’ll meet your goal in less than 3 years. If you read three books a night, you could reach your goal in just one year! Ask our friendly staff for suggestions—we’re here to help you on your journey to 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten!

Happy Reading!

Mrs. K & Mrs. B
Acknowledgements

The 2020-2024 Strategic Plan was unanimously accepted by the WPL Board of Trustees on February 25, 2020

Special Thanks to the Strategic Planning Team:
Lisa Amatruda, Paul Hadzima, Dana Manzi
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Cindy Romano
Maura Yerger