Topsfield Town Library
Strategic Plan
FY2017 - FY2022

Approved by the Board of Library Trustees 11/10/2016
Introduction

Topsfield’s first library, the Topsfield Library Society, was founded in 1794 when eighty residents paid 20 shillings each toward the purchase of books. The Reverend Asahel Huntington was secretary-librarian. The original volumes and bookcase are displayed in the library today.

The Town Meeting of January 1875 voted to establish a Free Town Library. The collections of several groups were gathered together at the Town Hall, and the library was open every Saturday. Donations funded the purchase of additional books. The current building was constructed in 1935 as a WPA project. The architect was Harold Kellogg. Space was shared with the Historical Society. The basement was converted to a children’s room in 1966; a general reconfiguration took place in 1973. The Historical Society space was converted to library use. By 1995, the town population had dramatically increased to 5,783 and the building was far too small to hold the collection and adequately meet the needs of modern library use. Records show that in 1968 the total library collection was 22,785 and grew to equal 43,361 by 1995 and by 2008 the collection had 64,000 items. In addition, the building was not ADA-compliant. With the assistance of a library construction grant from the Commonwealth, and sizable contributions from the Gould Fund and the town, the library expansion was completed in 1999. The size of the building increased by 250%.

The Planning Process

The Topsfield Town Library began the planning process with a community survey. The survey, which began on October 1, 2015, was posted on the library’s website, the Facebook page, and the Town’s website. Paper copies were also made available at the library and the Town Hall. The library staff and the Friends of the Library also “manned” a booth on opening day of the Topsfield Fair encouraging people to fill out the survey.

In November 2015, the library conducted a focus group composed of a library trustee, a Friend of the Topsfield Town Library, a downtown business owner, a high school student, and residents of Topsfield of various demographics. The members of the focus group were selected because they were library users and likely to have good insights into the library. Non-users were also solicited to attend but they did not. The focus group was facilitated by Mary Berhle, a consultant hired by the library.

The library staff met on 11/18, 12/3 in 2015, and 1/6, 1/27, and 3/23 in 2016 to discuss and draft an update of the library’s mission and vision. The staff also drafted action plans to implement the mission, vision, based on the feedback received from the community survey and focus group.
The Planning Process (cont’d)

The Library Board of Trustees received a draft of the plan at their July meeting, and more updates at the September meeting. The plan was discussed at length and updated at the October meeting. The Trustees approved the final version on 11/10/2016.

The Participants

The Topsfield Town Library warmly thanks the people who participated in the planning process. This plan could never have come together without their insights and support.

Focus Group Participants
Kathy Walsh
Ted Chapman
Joe Bateman
Leslie Finke
Elizabeth Chiffer
Cindi Deal

Library Trustees
Judith Lais

Friends of the Library
Susie Read

Facilitator
Mary Berhle

Library Staff
Chelsey Bell
Tracy Berenson
Sibyl Hezlett
Christine Manning
Noelle Martignetti
Lindsey Reckia
Nicole Rogers
Tom Salvo
Eileen Smith
Wendy Thatcher
Laura Zalewski

Our Mission

The mission of Topsfield Town Library is to be the cultural and informational resource for the community.

Our Vision

→ Offer a collection of books, films, and other media, including 24/7 virtual resources
→ Provide programs, including guest speakers and artists, for the Topsfield community
→ Afford access to current technologies
→ Make available spaces for meeting, creating, and collaborating
→ Respond to the community’s need for information, entertainment, and resources; provide opportunities for lifelong learning, from early literacy to youth and adult services
→ Maintain the library’s collection of art and highlight local artists with monthly displays
→ Deliver an excellent level of service by professional staff.
Our Goals ...

Offer a collection of books, films, and other media, including 24/7 virtual resources

→ Develop methods to highlight areas of the collection (example: Awesome Box). All FYs
→ Provide latest replacement for audio/visual materials as available. All FYs
→ Support and develop print collections. All FYs
→ Purchase digital resources that interest and assist patrons. All FYs
→ Continue to improve digital resources by advocating for the expansion of statewide eResources. All FYs
→ Relocate part of the browsing (red dot) collection to carts near the Circulation Desk yearly to increase awareness of this collection. “Red dot” footprints leading to collection. FY18
→ Improve collection signage to increase awareness of the library’s collections. FY17 - FY18
→ Use card catalog to display complimentary fiction/non-fiction displays on a regular basis. All FYs

Measures of Success

→ Use random surveys to determine patron satisfaction.
→ Employ usage statistics from digital products to determine which products are performing.
→ Increase positive patron feedback.
Provide programs, including guest speakers and artists, for the Topsfield community

→ Develop more programs featuring pop culture, supported by the library collection. All FYs
→ Collaborate with the Topsfield Historical Society for 2 programs per year. All FYs
→ Offer "hands on" art programs to capitalize on Topsfield's interest in the arts. All FYs
→ Engage children and their caregivers with Story Walks. FY18
→ Create a "Community Read " program every other year. FY17, FY19, FY21
→ Continue the commitment to music by sponsoring:
  → Three "Concerts in the Barn" per year. All FYs
  → A minimum of one open mic per year. All FYs
→ Continue to host a yearly celebration of the library's volunteers. All FYs
→ Continue to offer author lecture series with a minimum of one "big name" per year. All FYs
→ Collaborate with other town departments and committees such as the Health Department and Green Topsfield to offer displays and programming for the community. All FYs
→ Host a "Welcome to Topsfield" night for new residents. All FYs

Measures of Success
→ Receive more positive programs evaluations and higher attendance at programs.
OurGoals...

Afford access to current technologies

→ Purchase and install Apple desktops for the Young Adult area. FY17-FY18
→ Invest in portable technology such as tablets and “hot” spots to loan to patrons. All FYs
→ Install wireless printing. FY18
→ Install self-checkout station. FY19
→ Install public scanner. FY18
→ Continue to offer and publicize one-on-one technology tutorials for patrons. All FYs

Measures of Success
→ Increase number of patrons using new technology.
→ Conduct random patron surveys.
Our Goals...

Make available spaces for meeting, creating, and collaborating

- Re-purpose the Topsfield Room as a craft/maker space. FY17 and continue to add equipment in future fiscal years.
- Continue to make the meeting room in the library home for the town’s elected and appointed boards. All FYs
- Implement a “no plastic bag” zone at the library. FY18
- Enhance the Sensory Wall in Children’s Room. FY18
- Paint library spaces. FY19-FY20
- Evaluate furniture for repair and/or replacement. All FYs
- Propose new open hours based on feedback from community survey. FY18-19

**Measures of Success**

- Increase number of patrons using new technology.
- Conduct random patron surveys.
- Increase attendance.
Our Goals ...

Need help with your tablet or other device?
Want to learn how to borrow e-books?
Book a one-on-one session with a librarian!

Respond to the community’s need for information, entertainment, and resources while providing opportunities for lifelong learning

- Create a digital display in Circulation area to keep patrons informed of new library programs, services, etc. FY18
- Create a stronger homebound/shut in delivery service. FY18
- Provide outreach to underserved populations, such as young adults with autism or ASD. FY19
- Conduct yearly tours of the library for 4th grade students (new to Proctor School) and kindergarten children at the Steward School. All FYs
- Continue the after-school homework club. All FYs
- Digitize library collection of postcards and library photos. FY19
- Continue to update Topsfield Times wiki. All FYs
- Continue work with Masconomet Health Care to provide reading materials for their residents. All FYs.

Measures of Success
- Increase number of patrons served.
- Increase number of photos and postcards available on the library’s website.
- Increase number of reference questions answered by the Topsfield Times wiki.
Our Goals...

Maintain the library’s collection of art and highlight local artists with monthly displays

→ Invite local art studios to display their pupils’ work on a yearly basis. All FYs
→ Collaborate with local schools’ art departments to create student art shows in the meeting room. FY18
→ Continue to invite local artists to display their work monthly in the meeting room. All FYs
→ Maintain DeCordova corporate membership for the library. All FYs

Measures of Success
→ Increase number of Topsfield student art shows.
→ Increase number of requests to show in the meeting room.
→ Increase attendance at art receptions.
Our Goals...

Deliver an excellent level of service by professional staff

- Schedule patron service training for staff biannually. **FY18**
- Conduct training for staff to assist patrons with disabilities. **All FYs**
- Conduct refresher course for library volunteers annually. **All FYs**
- Redesign website and implement mobile design. **FY18**
- Send staff to local conferences and professional development workshops. **All FYs**

**Measures of Success**

- Increase number of staff attending workshops and conferences.
- Increase use and ease of use of library's website.
- Increase accuracy in shelving.
- Increase in new ideas and projects.
**2015 Quick Facts**

→ Median Household Income: $111,696

→ Educational Attainment:
  - High school graduate or higher: 96.1%
  - Bachelor's degree or higher: 61.7%
  - Graduate/Professional degree: 32.2%

→ Median House Value: $515,300

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**Elementary School Enrollment**

- **2010**: 613 students
- **2015**: 593 students

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1 Profiles of Massachusetts 2015, edited by David Garoogian, Greyhouse Publishing.
Topsfield Town Library by the Numbers

Material Circulation

Program Attendance

Meeting Room Use
2005 605 2015 741

Reference Questions
Answered
2005 3246
2015 6386

Downloadable eBooks/Audio books
Circulation and Expenditure

Survey Result Summary

How often do you use the library?

- Not at all: 4.4%
- Once or twice per year: 5.9%
- Several times per year: 9.9%
- Monthly: 27.6%
- Weekly: 41.9%
- Daily: 10.3%

How have you used the library?

- Borrow books, magazines
- Borrow music CDs, audio books, DVDs
- Attend programs
- Borrow museum passes
- Place to meet
- Read magazines, newspapers in the... (truncated)
- Do research, homework
- Place to study
- Download eBooks
- Use the computers
- Other
- Use the wifi
- Use genealogy resources
- Download magazines
- Download music
- NA - I do not use the library
- Download video

Bar chart showing the frequency of various library uses.
Reasons why library isn’t used.

What new services would you like the library to offer in the next few years?

Do you find the library’s programs interesting?
How do you find out about library events?

What is your age?

What is your gender?
What does the library do best? (Open response question with summarized responses)

![Bar chart showing responses to what the library does best]

What could the library improve? (Open response question with summarized responses)

![Pie chart showing responses to what the library could improve]