

2014-2017

Strategic Plan



Adopted by the Cary Memorial Library Board of Trustees
May 22, 2013

Cary Memorial Library
Strategic Plan
2014 – 2017

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Introduction

It is fitting that this Strategic Plan for the Cary Memorial Library was developed during the same 9-month period that marked the Town of Lexington's 300th Anniversary celebrations. It has truly been an inspiring time. As a community we have shown our appreciation for the individuals who shaped Lexington's past, and we have participated in a multicultural celebration that reflects the diversity of today's Lexington. I imagine many of us have considered how we continue these traditions and deliver a strong vibrant community into the hands of future generations.

This plan was also developed during a critical juncture in the history of public libraries. The publishing, information, and entertainment industries are changing, using digital, downloadable, and streaming methods to bring content directly to the consumer. The technology we use to access information has been reduced to the size of a deck of cards and has become ubiquitous in our lives. These changes have significant implications for libraries – indeed some have even questioned the need for libraries in the digital age. And yet there is something special about a public library. It is that “Third Place” that authors like Ray Oldenburg and Robert Putnam have written about and that we all need in our busy lives. It is where we can find trusted experts to help us find our way through the burgeoning labyrinth of information. The public library also remains one of the few places where individual privacy is protected and information is made freely accessible to all.

During the course of our public engagement process, key themes began to emerge. The accelerating pace of change, the community's strong commitment to education, the desire for meaningful civic engagement, the keen interest in ideas and innovation, and the appreciation of the growing diversity among us – these were all voiced again and again. We've used these themes as guideposts to help us organize our institutional priorities, and we will return to them each year when we develop our annual action plan.

This Strategic Plan is the work of many. The Library Board of Trustees set us up for success with a mandate to develop a plan that focused *outward* on community needs and interests. Maureen Sullivan, our strategic planning consultant and the current President of the American Library Association, has shared her insights from some of the country's other innovative libraries. Library users who responded to surveys, posted answers to our engagement questions, and attended our public forum provided a wealth of feedback. Our Community Advisory Committee of 25 Lexington residents discussed aspirations and mission statements, and served as a sounding board throughout the process. And finally, the staff Strategic Planning Committee melded ideas from the full library staff and the Lexington community with the best practices from our field to create this new Cary Memorial Library 2014 – 2017 Strategic Plan.

Koren Stembridge
Library Director

The Cary Library's mission is to ignite curiosity, engage minds, and connect our community.

Books and Information

We build and maintain a collection to reflect community needs and expectations, to include varying points of view, and to respond to changing interests and demographics. We keep abreast of an ever-evolving variety of materials and do our best to provide the content you want in the format you prefer.

- Priority – Build opportunities for users to connect over the books through readers' advisory services, book discussion groups, self-publishing support, and other activities that fulfill the Library's role as a place for reading, writing, and ideas.
- Priority – Identify and implement new models for providing digital content in response to user demand.
- Priority – Continue the tradition of strong special collections with a local focus – including world language materials, Lexington history, and works by Lexington authors.

People and Connections

We foster connections by helping you find exactly what you need and by putting you in touch with the intellectual and creative resources of our community. Our staff provides personal service both in the library and online.

- Priority – Train and sustain a friendly, creative, and knowledgeable staff to engage with library users in all manner of activities, throughout the library and beyond.
- Priority – Collaborate with the local community to provide programs and workshops that help users explore new ideas and learn new skills.
- Priority – Utilize the library website and social media to reach and engage users in new and innovative ways.

Ideas and Inspiration

We are more than a place where books are stored; we are a place where ideas are created, discovered, and shared. We know that you are inspired by more than words on a page – you find value in music, art, multimedia, and all forms of expression. We provide a venue to find and explore content, and also to create and share it.

- Priority – Develop an “ideas” space in the library for interactive exhibits or displays that invite users to explore and participate.
- Priority – Host programs that respond to the role of technology in people’s lives and inspire users to become informed content consumers and creators.
- Priority – Seek opportunities for the Library to host a wider range of artworks and performances in keeping with our role as a place for the arts in our community.

Technology and Innovation

The world is changing and the ways in which you experience books, gather information, and create content will continue to evolve. We will help you navigate these changes, explore new formats, and experiment with innovative devices in an environment where both experts and novices are welcome.

- Priority – Monitor and respond to the community’s appetite for technologies or services that are cost-prohibitive to individuals, but of interest to a broad range of library users.
- Priority – Upgrade library technology to keep pace with user demand. Ensure adequate speed and bandwidth for wireless access.
- Priority – Purchase and make available a variety of devices so that users can try technology that is of interest to them.

Generations and Cultures

Our collections, services, and programs reflect the broad and deep interests of our community. We strive to be responsive to your needs across generations and cultures.

- Priority – Improve the library experience for non-native English speakers.
- Priority – Remove barriers to service for library users, paying special attention to the needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities.

- Priority – Enhance services and spaces for youth to make them appealing and engaging and to ensure that they meet the educational needs of our student population.

Individual and Community

We are a vibrant, bustling facility located in the heart of Lexington. We provide you with quiet space to read, write, and think as well as space to talk, laugh, and learn together.

- Priority – Evaluate how the changing needs of library users can best be met within the existing facility, repurposing spaces as necessary.
- Priority – Designate appropriate space for quiet study for those seeking a more contemplative environment.
- Priority – Develop a strategy for accommodating the ebb and flow of large numbers of people – teens during after school hours, overflow from popular library programs, and those seeking shelter during times of need.

About Lexington

The Town of Lexington, Massachusetts, is a suburban community located 11 miles northwest of Boston. First settled in 1642, it now encompasses 16.64 square miles with a total population of 33,098 (2012 Town census). The town is primarily residential with a population density of 1,910 persons per square mile and a home ownership rate of over 80%. Almost 10% of the land is permanently set aside as publicly held conservation land. Lexington was ranked 8th in Massachusetts in terms of per capita income (2010 U.S. Census Bureau). The U.S. Census Bureau's "American Fact Finder: 2007-2011 American Community Survey" reports that Lexington's per capita income in 2011 was \$67,584, median household income was \$136,610, and mean household income was \$193,017; 64.9% of households had incomes of \$100,000 or more. The poverty rate in 2010 was 4%. Over 77% of residents are college graduates and over 50% of residents hold graduate or professional degrees.

Lexington's total population is projected to increase slightly over the next five years. The composition of the population is also projected to change. According to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, age groups that are projected to increase during 2010-2020 are 25-34 year olds and 50-79 year olds, with all other age groups projected to decrease slightly. The highest growth rate rests with the 60-74 year olds, projected to comprise over 23% of the total population in 2020 (compared to comprising over 17% in 2010).

Lexington's population is also changing in terms of race and ethnicity. The 2010 U.S. Census Bureau reported the Lexington population as 75.5% White (compared to 86.1% in 2000), 1.5% Black or African American (1.1% in 2000), 19.9% Asian (10.9% in 2000) and 2.3% Hispanic (1.4% in 2000). (The total Asian American population in Lexington grew by 91.4% between 2000 and 2010.) Of Lexington's population, 9.4% are Chinese, 4.8% are Asian Indian, and 3.2% are Korean. The Massachusetts Department of Education reported the 2011-12 school age population of Lexington as 58.7% White (compared to 66.8% in 2007-08), 4.4% Black or African American (4.1% in 07-08), 28.9% Asian (22.6% in 07-08) and 3.5% Hispanic (3.9% in 07-08).

These population changes will figure significantly in library planning for collection development, programming, and other services.

Lexington is home to nearly 1,200 employers (including Stride Rite, Shire Human Genetic Therapies, Cubist Pharmaceuticals, VistaPrint, BAE Systems, and MIT Lincoln Laboratories), and is headquarters for nearly 30 national companies and 7 publicly traded companies. Nearly 75% of the Lexington work force is employed in professional, management, educational, scientific, health, or social services areas. Lexington citizens are also very active in town affairs. The representative town meeting is comprised of nearly 200 members, and over 50 standing committees ensure that the concerns of the community are heard and addressed. Particular attention is given to preserving the town's strong historical importance as the birthplace of the American Revolution. Lexington Public Schools include six elementary schools, two middle schools, Lexington High School, and Minuteman Regional High School.

Strategic Planning Process Timeline

May 10, 2012	RFP for Strategic Planning consulting services issued
June 6, 2012	Maureen Sullivan hired as planning consultant
July 20, 2012	Maureen Sullivan meets with Library Board Executive Committee as well as staff Strategic Planning Committee
September 7, 2012	Maureen Sullivan facilitates Strategic Planning session for all library staff members
October 16, 2012	Community Advisory Committee meeting #1
October 15, 2012 - December 28, 2012	Community invited to respond to questions on “Public Participation Bulletin Boards”
November 13, 2012	Discussion with 2020 Vision Committee’s Subcommittee on Demographic Change
November 19, 2012 - January 25, 2013	Online Survey (paper copies available in library)
November 22, 2012	Strategic Planning article in Lexington Minuteman
December 5, 2012	Community Advisory Committee meeting #2
January, 2013	Strategic Planning article in Colonial Times
January 13, 2013	Maureen Sullivan facilitates Public Forum on Library Services
January 15, 2013	Teen Strategic Planning Session
February 27, 2013	Community Advisory Committee meeting #3
March – April, 2013	Staff SPC develops draft Strategic Plan document
April 26, 2013	Maureen Sullivan facilitates half-day library staff work session
May 1, 2013	Draft Strategic Plan document presented to Library Board Executive Committee for initial approval
May 22, 2013	Strategic Plan Document presented to Full Library Board for approval