

CURIOSITY
CONNECTION
COMMUNITY

STEVENS MEMORIAL LIBRARY
STRATEGIC
PLAN 2026-2029



INTRODUCTION

Stevens Memorial Library is a community hub that provides resources and services to 6,000 plus residents in Ashburnham, MA. This strategic plan will guide us through fiscal years 2026-2029.

A strategic plan improves community engagement and operational excellence while promoting transparency and accountability.

This Plan defines our future directions and aligns our actions with our aspirations while creating a shared understanding between the Library and the Ashburnham community about actions and priorities. By listening to our stakeholders, we can understand the Library's strengths and challenges and create a realistic but aspirational road map to achieve future objectives. The Plan is flexible; it allows us to adapt to changing environments by identifying our successes and determining the best approach to meet our challenges. It enables us to track progress and empowers us to meet the diverse needs of our stakeholders.

MISSION

**Stevens Memorial Library is
your inclusive community hub
where people of all ages
discover new possibilities.**

VISION

**Transforming lives by
inspiring curiosity,
connection, and
community.**



OUR PROCESS

The Library started its strategic planning process in January 2024.

Library Director Jess Mynes and Youth Services Librarian Tiffany Call met with focus groups to discuss the Library. Jess conducted Strengths-Opportunities-Aspirations-Results (SOAR) Exercises with the Library Trustees, the Library Team and the Friends of the Library. Specific activities engaged key community stakeholders in the process of gathering information for the Plan’s creation. Community feedback was assessed and integrated into the planning process.



COLLECTING FEEDBACK

- **S.O.A.R. Exercises with**
 - Library Staff
 - Board of Trustees and a Select Board member
 - Friends of the Library Board members
- **7 Focus Groups**
- **Information and data from previous surveys including:**
 - Technology Survey, Library of Things survey, and one-on-one interviews

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW





AREAS OF FOCUS

Feedback from community members provided insight into their perceptions of the Library and its potential future.

Their input contributed to the Strategic Plan.

KEY LEARNINGS

3

FACILITIES

CREATE MORE FLEXIBLE SPACES, IMPROVE EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR SIGNAGE, UPGRADE TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE, ENHANCE YOUTH SPACES, IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY

PROGRAMMING

DIVERSIFY ADULT AND CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS, EXPLORE TWEENS AND TEEN PROGRAM IDEAS

MARKETING & OUTREACH

UTILIZE NEW AND EXISTING COMMUNICATION CHANNELS, IMPROVE TARGETED MESSAGING, GROW OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

TECHNOLOGY

EXPAND THE LIBRARY'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING COMMUNITY EFFORTS TO ADDRESS TECHNOLOGY ACCESS AND SUPPORT, PROVIDE TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT FOR PATRONS AS NEEDED

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

GROW AND DIVERSIFY COLLECTIONS CONTENT AND FORMATS

OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT

IMPLEMENT TARGETED APPROACHES TO INCREASE TEEN AWARENESS OF LIBRARY OFFERINGS, EXPLORE TECHNOLOGY THAT IMPROVES LIBRARY SERVICES

SERVICES

IMPLEMENT HOME DELIVERY

STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

LITERACY & LIFELONG LEARNING

Establish the Library as a lifelong learning leader in developing the community's reading, information, digital, food, and cultural literacy skills.

- Create reading, information, and food literacy programming for all populations and learning styles
- Create engaging, innovative programming for all populations and learning styles
- Cultivate a collection that supports the cultural, intellectual, academic, and recreational needs of our community
- Assess the technical literacy needs and interests of the community



STRATEGIC DIRECTION: COMMUNICATION

Increase the community's awareness of the value of Library resources and services.

- Coordinate and facilitate Library communications and outreach opportunities
- Increase the Library's visibility in the Town of Ashburnham
- Maintain the Library website's relevance and currency
- Develop a process to collect and respond to feedback from Library stakeholders
- Align funding opportunities with Library communications

STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Foster recognition of the Library as an essential community leader and collaborator.

- Create a welcoming learning environment that fosters usage of Library space and services by all ages
- Develop partnerships and collaborations with other Town Departments, local schools, business and organizations, and community stakeholders
- Enhance support of and collaboration with The Friends of the Stevens Memorial Library
- Leverage the knowledge and expertise of local organizations, libraries, consortia, and individuals to strengthen Library programming and services





STRATEGIC DIRECTION: ADAPTIVE CHANGE

Continuously assess and update Library services, facilities, resources, and team member skills and knowledge to provide transformative Library experiences that enhance users' lives.

- Increase accessibility to Library programming, initiatives, and services by expanding the Library's presence in the community.
- Reach new and underserved populations at their point of need
- Create a growth mindset Library culture for professional development and ongoing assessment of Library services and initiatives
- Develop a learning environment that compliments the use of Library services and resources
- Improve the Financial and Future Preparedness of the Library

ANNUAL ACTION PLANS

Each year, the Library develops an Action Plan for the following fiscal year. This Plan identifies new initiatives and projects but does not include ongoing operational responsibilities.

The Action Plan is a living document. It reflects a tactical approach to directions and activities that have been identified as priorities. It allows for flexibility to integrate new needs and priorities as they arise. Action Plans will be updated annually.



COMMUNICATING PROGRESS

The Library Director will review progress toward achieving the Strategic Plan's directions, objectives, and activities quarterly. The Director will communicate progress to the team and the Trustees at monthly meetings. The Director will also report on performance highlights from the calendar year to the community.

The Strategic Plan, including its appendices, is available on the Library's website.

TRUSTEES' APPROVAL

This Strategic Plan was approved unanimously by the Board of Trustees at their September 17, 2024 meeting.

LOOKING FORWARD

This Strategic Plan is a living document. The challenges we face, and the community's needs will continue to evolve. We've created a Plan that reflects thoughtful awareness of our challenges while providing us with a road map to meet those challenges. We will continue to practice a thoughtful approach and update our road map as needed. We are committed to proactively identifying and meeting the community's needs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We appreciate the time and effort that everyone contributed to the Strategic Plan. The Plan would not have been completed without contributions from the community, the Library team, the Board of Trustees, and the Friends of the Library. Ashburnham is a unique place and we are honored to contribute to the community's well being.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW CENSUS DATA

APPENDIX B

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROJECT FLOW CHART

APPENDIX C

LIBRARY OF THINGS SURVEY RESULTS

APPENDIX D

TECHNOLOGY SURVEY

APPENDIX E

S.O.A.R. QUESTIONS

APPENDIX F

S.O.A.R. SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

(INCLUDES TRUSTEES, LIBRARY TEAM, AND FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY RESPONSES)

APPENDIX G

FOCUS GROUPS SUMMARY REPORTS

- TEEN FOCUS GROUP (1)
- PARENT FOCUS GROUP (1)
- PATRON FOCUS GROUPS (5)

INCLUDES RESPONSES FROM ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS